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ABSTRACT

This publication reports on Communities in Crisis, a resource and adult education program designed to encourage local community leaders and volunteers to reflect critically upon their experiences and exchange ideas across different towns, cities, and regions in the United Kingdom. Part 1 describes the program and its three aims: sharing experiences, helping with project work, and building knowledge. Part 2 contains edited extracts from 15 project reports prepared by participants between 1983 and 1987. They are presented under three headings, each of which has represented a recurring focus for the preparation of project work in the programs. "Identifying needs and evaluating policies" refers to projects that involved participants in small-scale research investigations and data collection. "Case studies" features projects that focused on descriptions of organizational development and pressure group campaigns. "Reflection on personal experience" refers to projects in which participants use, value, and critically review their experiences of community work. Part 3 is a review of participants' gains; the practical use that has been made of the projects; and guidelines for the organization and planning of project work with community groups. Appendixes include a summary of research to evaluate motivation, study skills, and learning approaches of one group of Community in Crisis and a list of 21 references. (YLB)

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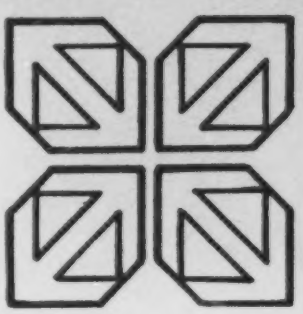
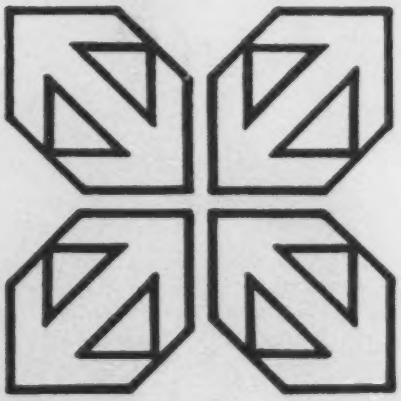


LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE

Project Work with Community Groups

A Report of the Communities in Crisis Programme



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CE 056 320

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A Report of the Communities in Crisis Programme

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Any adult education programme which has been running for over six years is indebted to a wide range of people and organizations. Our thanks to the funders of Communities in Crisis in the North West, Swindon and Oxford; the secretarial staff of the William Temple Foundation and the Applied Social Studies course at Ruskin College, and the many community workers, educationalists and social workers who have acted as advisors, consultants and tutors for the programme.

Our greatest debt is to the participants from the local community groups who have, in the face of many competing pressures, sustained their interest and involvement. We hope that this report will go some way to rewarding their efforts.

William Temple Foundation: Tony Addy, Julie Batten, Roger Clarke, Keith Smithies.

Ruskin College: Richard Bryant, Maureen Sears, Bruce Clarke, (Self-Start Consultants).

PART ONE: THE PROGRAMME

INTRODUCTION.

Communities in Crisis is a small scale resource and adult education programme which is designed to encourage local community leaders and volunteers to reflect critically upon their experiences and exchange ideas across different towns, cities and regions. Underpinning the programme is a concern with the long term impact of social and economic change upon the organisational life of working class communities, coupled with the recognition that local leaders and volunteers rarely enjoy the space, time and resources to meet together and share experiences.

The impact of long term social and economic change poses complex and formidable problems for those community groups and volunteers who are confronted, on a daily basis, with the social costs of job losses, increasing poverty and the erosion of public services. These material deprivations are accompanied by the experience of living through a period of restructuring in the institutional fabric of working class communities. Traditional patterns of family and social relations are in the throes of long term change and once well established class and political allegiances have been ruptured and challenged. At this time of crisis, community groups have become the target for intense political and organisational pressures. The radical right extol the virtues of Victorian style self help and the governments social policies are actively promoting a 'mixed economy of welfare' in which voluntary organisations are assigned a front line role. Elsewhere on the political spectrum sections of the left, reflecting a revival in municipal socialism, are promoting participatory policies in the management of local government and are experimenting with decentralised models of service provision. Each of these diverse trends assume that more tasks and responsibilities can be undertaken by individual carers, volunteers and community groups. Yet, compared with the professionals who work in local areas - social workers, youth leaders, community workers, clergy etc - members of community groups are often starved of support and have limited opportunities to share their experiences. Educational programmes which are specifically geared around the needs and interests of community groups tend to be short term, localised in scope and unevenly distributed. Moreover, when relevant programmes do exist, material and social barriers can deter the involvement of local activists. The participation of women - the backbone of most groups - can be limited by child minding, caring for adult dependents and part time work commitments. Even modest course fees can inhibit involvement.

The Communities in Crisis programme has three aims:

1. *Sharing Experiences. Providing opportunities for representatives from groups in the North West, Swindon and Oxford to meet together, exchange ideas and learn from each others experience. Rather than opt for a focus on particular interests, such as tenants associations or unemployed groups, the aim has been to involve a range of different interests: embracing mutual aid, service delivery, issue centred and pressure groups. The organisers assume that community organisations, from different regions and with different interests, are likely to share a common set of educational and organisational needs. For instance:*

   - *How to sustain activities beyond crises centred initiatives.*

   - *How to work with groups and individuals who are newcomers to collective action.*

   - *How to create organisations which are both participatory in structure and capable of producing concrete results.*

   - *How to respond to rapidly changing economic and political circumstances, which may render obsolete traditional styles of organizing.*

2. *Project Work. Supporting participants in the preparation of a project, which focuses on a current issue which is effecting a local group or a planned future development or a review of work undertaken. The purpose of this commitment is to root the programme in real life issues, provide the participants with a specific agenda for their involvement and generate material which can feed back to local groups and function as an aid for improving their effectiveness.*

3. *Building Knowledge. To share, via local and national publications, the experiences of the participants and develop know how which will provide a foundation for promoting resource and educational programmes for community groups in other parts of the country.*

The William Temple Foundation and Ruskin College organized the first programme during 1983-84, with funding from a private sponsor and the British Council of Churches. This programme brought together participants from sixteen groups based in Salford, Blackburn, Merseyside, Corby, Swindon and Oxford. Funding difficulties prevented a joint follow up and the second

programme, in 1985-86, was restricted to linking representatives from ten groups in Swindon and Oxford. This initiative comprised a unit within a wider adult education programme, the Preparatory Education Project (PEP), which was jointly organized by Ruskin, the Workers Education Association (WEA), and the Open University. In 1986 the William Temple Foundation was able to relaunch Communities in Crisis in the North West with funding from the Manpower Services Commission (Voluntary Projects Programme). Between 1986-88 three programmes were organized in the North West, involving participants from seventeen groups based in Rochdale, Bury, Blackburn, Warrington, Tameside and Salford. Currently the William Temple Foundation is in the process of planning, with funding from a trust, a new programme and a Swindon based programme, involving participants from seven groups, is reaching its final stage. The Swindon programme was funded by a local charity, the WEA, Thamesdown Council and Ruskin. Since 1983 the William Temple Foundation and Ruskin have collaborated in the organization of six Communities in Crisis programmes, which have involved over eighty participants from thirty community groups.

Although financial constraints have dictated the geographic scope of the various initiatives, all the programmes have shared a common set of core elements: a combination of local meetings, day conferences, short (two-five days) residential workshops and project work linked with a support tutor. Each programme has been funded on a no cost to participant basis. Costs covered include travel expenses, day workshop and residential fees, childminding and a small grant to underwrite the costs of preparing the project work. The method of recruitment and the composition of the participants have also shared common elements. Recruitment has mainly been via contacts with community organisations, local networks and links with professional workers in the fields of community work, adult education and social work. The majority of the participants have been women, ages have ranged from late teens to post-retirement and none have held full time community work posts. Most of the participants left school at the minimum leaving age and only a handful have had previous experience of a sustained involvement in adult or further education. The majority of the participants, especially in the North West programmes, have been unemployed.[1]

The first report on Communities in Crisis, published in 1985[2], focused on the organization of the programme, the social context of the groups involved and the relevance of the initiative in relation to national debates about resources for community work. Four years on, we are now better placed to review and comment on the project work undertaken by the participants; the approach to project based learning, examples of project reports, the personal experiences of the participants, the use made of project material and the lessons we would identify for groups who are planning to initiate similar

programmes.

PROJECT WORK.

Underpinning Communities in Crisis is the philosophy that adult education should be actively committed to supporting the development of community organisations and making a contribution - however modest - to improving the social and economic circumstances of working class groups and communities. The lynchpin of the approach, and the means for linking participants with wider social and political action, is project based work which is jointly negotiated between the programme organisers, the participants and local groups. Just as Communities in Crisis stands within a well established adult education tradition,[3] so there is nothing novel about project based work and learning. Project work, in a variety of forms, is practised at all levels of the educational system - from schools to universities - and is normally associated with a student or participant centred approach to learning.

> *'At the most general level, project-based learning can be defined as an activity in which students develop an understanding of a topic or issue through working on an actual (or simulated) real life problem or issue and in which they have some degree of responsibility in designing the learning activities.[4]'*

Alistair Morgan, whose definition is cited above, has identified a continuum of three models of project based work and learning - 'project exercise', 'project component', 'project orientation' - which differ according to the degree to which projects are based on academic topics or real life issues and 'control', the degree to which projects are teacher or student centred. Of these three models, 'project orientation' represents the most radical departure from conventional teacher centred approaches to learning. In this model, project work is the core element of the programme, there is a primary emphasis on 'real world' social and political issues and the participants exercise considerable control over their own learning.

> *'From a pedagogical standpoint, project-orientation represents a form of study seen as relevant by students and seems to invoke (and call for) considerable intrinsic motivation: students by determining their project topics, in effect design their own curriculum.[5]'*

Communities in Crisis can be firmly located within the 'project orientation' framework. Project work forms the central activity, the participants and local groups define issues and topics and the tutors act as enablers or facilitators rather than conventional teachers. It would, however, be deceptive to imply

or claim that the Communities in Crisis approach represents a pure expression of participant centred learning, free from the shaping influence of 'professionals' or 'tutors'. Staff and tutors actively assist participants in the defining and refining of their project topics. Whenever outside agents are involved it is impossible to draw absolute distinctions in adult education between 'teacher centred' and 'student centred' approaches or, as in the parallel debate in community work, between 'directive' and 'non-directive' approaches. The key issue is not whether the educationalist or community worker exercises influence, but whether the influence which is exercised is informed or not by a value and organisational commitment to promote the empowerment of the participants and engage in a process of transferring responsibilities for learning and action. Because the project work is related to specific community organisations, there is also a direct link with local action. Communities in Crisis programmes also include specific skill training (eg. assertiveness, building and maintaining organisations) which assist community action.

STAGES AND PROCESS.

Morgan has identified four predictable stages in the process of undertaking project work;[6] deciding on a topic, collecting information and data, analysing and interpreting data, writing the final report. All these stages occur in project work with community groups but not, in our experience, in such a neat and rational progression. Over the six years of Communities in Crisis it has been difficult to develop a consistent pattern of planning and organization. The type and availability of funding has conditioned the length of programmes - which have varied from six to eighteen months - has determined the availability of staff resources and this has influenced the scope for undertaking joint work between regions.[7] These constraints also make it difficult to describe the sequence of events in a 'typical' programme. The stages noted below identify common elements but, almost inevitably, present an idealised picture of the overall process and organization of any one programme.

1. *Recruitment. This has normally been undertaken through contacts with community groups, professional workers and adult education networks. Former participants have often proved an invaluable source of contacts in recruiting for a new programme. The recruitment process can be slow and time consuming - stretching over six-eight months for some programmes - and should allow potential participants the opportunity to fully explore the implications of the work, before making a final decision about whether to become involved.*

2. *Defining Projects and Identifying Resources. The initial stage of a programme is focused on defining the issues and*

topics for the project work; examining the practical relevance of the issues for local groups and the support which groups will provide the participants; identifying the tutor support which will be needed and the material resources which are available for project work, childminding, travel, day and residential schools. At this stage, the proposals for the project work often range from specific, clearly defined, exercises (eg. the preparation of a grant application, or the constitution and legal structure for an organisation), through to highly generalised and ambitious research investigations (eg. a survey of unemployment or the needs and aspirations of women living on a housing estate).

3. *Refining Project Work. Some participants move, relatively smoothly, into the detailed preparation of their projects. Others experience difficulties in translating hunches and ideas into a manageable form and are faced with the task of refining and scaling down their original proposals. At this stage there is considerable discussion of methods and data collection ('is your survey really necessary'?); the unpacking of vague and over-generalised ideas and the testing out, with other participants and tutors, of plans for carrying out the project work.*

4. *Material and Data Collection. This can start at an earlier point, especially with participants who are mainly drawing on their own experiences for material (eg. personal accounts of a campaign). However, for many participants, the compiling of material is subject to false starts, delays and the temporary loss of nerve and confidence. Contact with tutors and support from local groups and co-participants can be crucial at this stage. Isolation from tutor contact and group support can result in frustration and drop out.*

5. *Mid-Point Review. Ideally, a residential school (two-three days) is timetabled for the mid-point of a programme, when projects have been refined and data collection is underway. The plans for residentials are drawn up with the participants and, invariably, include a mixture of group reviews of project work; individual sessions with tutors; workshops on common issues (eg. funding), the occasional lecture on a current development in social policy (eg. changes in the social security system), some skill training and periods of private study.*

6. *Continuation of Data Collection/Preparation of Project Report. The individual timetables for completing data collection and commencing 'writing up' can vary widely. Projects which involve surveys tend to be particularly time consuming and the work of all the participants is liable to*

be adversely effected by the demands and strains of domestic and community commitments. The preparation of the final report can be traumatic; making sense of the material collected, the challenge of writing and the frustration of 'not being able to get thoughts down on paper'. Again, tutor and group support is vital at this stage.

7. *Review. If resources are available a second residential school (two-three days) can be valuable at the stage when participants are either polishing up the final draft of their report or, as often happens, are experiencing blocks in completing the work. Participants sometimes require extended periods of private study time, linked with 'on demand' consultations with tutors. Formal sessions tend to be limited to seminar style presentations of the project work and exercises in presentation techniques. These exercises, such as role play and exercises in presenting material to a group or meeting, have proved useful for confidence building and as 'safe' rehearsals for situations which the participants could face in the future (eg. the presentation of a grant application to a council or trust).*

8. *Production of Report and Use of Material. The final production of the project can be time consuming; extra funds may have to be found to cover printing costs, layout and design have to be considered, feedback from local groups can prompt alterations to the text and target audiences have to be taken into account. The distribution and practical use of the projects is not instant and there tends to be a trickle effect over months and even years. (See Section Three for details).*

9. *Presentation Day. The formal ending of a programme is marked by a presentation day at which the participants review their projects with an invited gathering of friends, past and present members of Communities in Crisis, colleagues from community groups and representatives from funding and statutory agencies. The day provides an important opportunity to both share information and demonstrate the communication skills which the participants have developed and polished up during the programme.*

10. *Feedback and Continuing Contact. The links between the programme and the participants does not normally finish with the completion of the project work. Contact is maintained at a number of levels; the tutors monitor the outcome and use of the projects, ex-participants help with recruitment for new programmes and, in some cases, become involved in fund raising for future initiatives and act as tutors, planners and advisors for programmes. These continuing links can also operate at an organisational*

level. The current programme in Swindon is being co-sponsored and managed by a local community organization - the Swindon Unemployed Movement. An active planning and development group of past participants, supportive co-workers and Foundation staff now takes responsibility for the North West programmes. Gradually, the ownership of Communities in Crisis is extending beyond the boundaries of Ruskin College and the William Temple Foundation.

The overall process represents a demanding and hazardous journey for the participants. A number drop out en route, up to 20 percent of some programmes, and others may only half complete their projects by the end of a programme.

PROBLEMS AND CRITICISMS.

Project work can maximise participants control over learning, can generate socially useful knowledge and can make a contribution to improving the effectiveness of local community organisations. It is, however, a high risk approach to adult education for all the parties involved - programme organisers, tutors and participants. (See Part Three for details). For the organisers, Communities in Crisis style project work can be relatively expensive, administratively complex and potentially controversial, in that the emphasis upon a collectivist philosophy of learning and action runs contrary to the norms of a political climate which celebrates individualism. For the tutors, it requires a mix of educational and community work skills and a fundamental departure from a teacher centred approach to learning. For the participants, project work can be time consuming, can make sustained demands on personal motivation and often involves false starts and periods of self doubt.

These difficulties may account for why project work has had a chequered history in adult education. Judith Edwards in her review of the Liverpool Second Chance to Learn course describes how, on two occasions, 'research projects' were tried and abandoned 'as a failure'.[8] Edwards identifies a number of factors to account for this situation; over-ambitious project plans, confusion and uncertainty amongst tutors, students experiencing difficulties in coping with independent learning, resource constraints and the 'greatest problem of all - lack of time'. These dilemmas and challenges have also surfaced in the Communities in Crisis programme, but have proved less problematic and more manageable because the whole programme has been geared to project work rather than project work forming, in terms of Morgan's typology, an 'exercise' or 'component'[9] within a wider programme which has a central emphasis upon other educational objectives and methods: eg. course based programmes which are mainly geared to individual development or access into further and higher education. Grafting project work onto course based programmes can create tensions, because it requires a different

approach from tutors and students. Edwards records how some of the Liverpool students experienced problems in making the transition.

> *'Generally there was considerable resistance on the part of many students, some of whom had come to Second Chance with expectations of tutor-control and passive learning and found it hard to cope with independent learning. This requires a great deal of support and guidance which was not always forthcoming. Some unconfident students had been content to sit quietly listening to seminar discussions. In research work they could not 'hide away'. They were asked to go out, sometimes alone, to collect information or to interview someone. Many found this very unnerving.[10]'*

If project work is planned as a link between adult education and community action, or as a bridge between individual and collective goals, then this has implications for all the elements of a programme - resources, tutors, student recruitment and follow up. The failure to fully recognise the nature and extent of this commitment can result in confusion and missed opportunities.

PART TWO: PROJECT REPORTS

INTRODUCTION.

This section contains edited extracts from fifteen of the project reports which were prepared by participants between 1983-87. The extracts are intended to convey a sense of the range and style of the written work produced, and to provide insights into the complexity of the economic, social and organizational issues which confront local activists and groups on a day to day basis. It must be stressed that the extracts are not intended to represent a meritocratic collection of the 'best of Communities in Crisis'. They have been drawn from those reports which were to hand during the early months of 1988 and, inevitably, much useful material has had to be omitted.[11] Projects which were completed in 1988/89 have been excluded, as have those completed reports which were difficult to lift extracts from, such as handbooks and guides to local services. Also, a number of the completed projects were not produced in a conventional report form. These include videos, computer programmes (eg. relating to welfare benefits), exhibition and display material. Finally, it should be noted that some of the extracts do scant justice to the detail and richness of the original reports, a number of which run to over 10,000 words in length.

The extracts are presented under three headings, each of which has represented a recurring focus for the preparation of project work in the programmes. 'Identifying needs and evaluating policies' refers to projects which involved participants in small scale research investigations and data collection, relating to the felt needs of local groups and the impact of policies and services on the life chances of areas. Surveys figure prominently in this type of project, and the scope and ambition of some of the investigations undertaken would not have been out of place in the fieldwork studies of full time students. Jean Seddon's investigation of the jobs created by the Salford Enterprise Zone (extract 1) involved visiting firms over a six month period and produced a remarkable response rate of 97% (73 out of 75 questionnaires completed), while Breda Brown and Madeline Tanner's survey of unemployment on the Pinehurst estate in Swindon (extract 2) involved conducting lengthy interviews with the members of over a hundred households. Shelley Benson (extract 3), working in the only rural area to be included in a programme, hand delivered 150 questionnaires to all the homes in an Oxfordshire village, and Dorothy Clarke and Raziya Sacranie (extract 4) used a combination of questionnaires and discussion groups to elicit information, from a hundred respondents, for their study of the needs of young Asian women in Swindon. Surveys are only one method of gathering information and local investigations can also draw upon personal and group experience, secondary source material, gathering information from informal networks, group meetings and contacts with professional workers.

The womens group on the Springs estate in Bury drew heavily upon personal and group experience to compile their case for resources to set up a centre (extract 5), and Silas Kahn used a combination of personal experience, secondary source material and visits to other areas to develop arguments for the establishing of a welfare and cultural centre for the Muslim community in Swindon, (extract 6).

'Case studies' feature prominently in the literature on professional community work and, not surprisingly, accounts and descriptions of organizational developments and pressure group campaigns have provided a focus for several of the project reports. Doreen Mitchell's account of the setting up of a community group - in the aftermath of race conflicts in Blackburn - should strike chords with other experiences, especially the crisis origins of the initiative, the pitfalls of organizing a committee and the difficulties of establishing credibility in the eyes of the 'Town Hall', (extract 7). How to creatively handle organizational dilemmas also figures as one strand in the SUDS report on the establishing of a womens co-operative in Salford (extract 8). Unlike many case studies, written by either volunteers or professionals, this report moves beyond narrative description and conveys a feel for the experiences of the participants, including their struggles with gender discrimination. Throughout the SUDS report, a central emphasis is placed on the value of sharing and respecting personal experiences and this philosophy is also echoed in Ken Walker and Celia Moody's account of the activities of 'reminiscence' groups in Hattersley, (extract 9). In their report, breaking down the social isolation of senior citizens is not viewed in terms of 'pensioner only' services but is tackled through gatherings which are 'not being used as a vehicle for lessons in history but a means, maybe, of getting together all generations in the community'. Case studies are easier to compile when you have a success, however modest, to report. But, for many activists, the experience of the last decade has been littered with crushing defeats, especially when they have attempted to confront the economic and social policies of the central government. A sharp and bitter reminder of this reality is provided by the SUM account of the closure of Swindon's once famous railworks, (extract 10). The SUM members combined their project with an active involvement in the Railworks Defence Campaign and their report complemented an hour long video which the group produced on the closure.

'Reflection on personal experience' forms a part of all the project work undertaken in the Communities in Crisis programme. Participants are encouraged to use, value and critically review their experiences of community work and, for some, this process becomes the central theme of their projects. Margaret Bailey's contribution (extract 11), draws upon her experiences of helping to set up a new community centre in Salford, and Ann Dixon

(extract 12), reflects upon her experiences, as a volunteer, with a family centre in Swindon. Both are concerned with defining guidelines for practice which are rooted in a commitment to create open, democratic organizations in which 'each individual must be seen as having an important contribution to make'. This commitment is not the product of lofty, abstract idealism. It is born out of the hard experience of struggling within traditional community organizations, which are often dominated by unrepresentative elites who talk down to the membership and newcomers. The extract from Lillian Timms' report, on the politics of funding, (extract 13) underlines the difficulties of sustaining participatory values and voluntary action in a hostile economic and political climate. Her check list of the problems confronting groups in Salford starkly sums up the pressures which affect many working class communities. In a similar vein, Fred Wright's reflections on the housing crisis highlights the need for major political reform and draws upon his experience of over twenty years involvement with tenants associations in Swindon, (extract 14).

The extracts are completed by a report from Elizabeth Whittingham about her experiences of producing a brochure on the history of the Everton district of Liverpool. In the first Communities in Crisis programme the staff neglected to plan and budget for the design, production and distribution of the reports. All attention was focused on the process and organization of the project work. Elizabeth's account provides a typical example of the time, labour and ingenuity which many of the participants devoted to ensuring that their work was shared with others.

IDENTIFYING NEEDS AND EVALUATING POLICIES.

(1) SALFORD ENTERPRISE ZONE: JEAN SEDDON (1985).

From the beginning of January to the end of June 1984, I carried out a survey of the firms in the Zone, to find out the following information:

1. The total number of people employed.
2. The total number of Salford residents who were employed.
3. Were the firms newly formed, relocated or new branches of existing firms.
4. Where the relocated firms came from.
5. What the staffing levels were.
6. The type of business.

To achieve the results I got meant walking around the Zone for one afternoon, every week, taking the Zone in sections. Retracing my steps when new firms were opening, giving them a few weeks to settle in before calling with the questionnaire. In all of the six months I only had one refusal. Because of firms opening up all the time, I had to limit the survey to six months, otherwise it would have gone on forever.

Analysis of Results.

1. Out of the 75 questionnaires delivered between 9th January and 29th June 1984, 73 were completed and handed back or returned. A 97.3% response.

2. a. Of the 73 completed questionnaires, the firms were made up as follows:

34	relocated firms.	46.6%
34	new firms.	46.6%
5	new branch openings.	6.8%

b. The relocated firms came from the following areas:

17	Salford, Eccles, Irlam, Walkden.	23.3%
11	within the Manchester area.	15.8%
4	Cheshire area.	5.48%
1	Bury area.	1.37%
1	Oldham area.	1.37%

c. The relocations from the Salford area were as follows:

13	within 'Old' Salford.	17.8%
2	Walkden.	2.74%
1	Eccles.	1.37%
1	Irlam.	1.37%

d. The firms can be put into the following categories:

21	warehouses.	28.8%
17	service industries.	23.3%
16	engineers.	21.9%
7	manufacturers.	9.6%
5	builders, design & shopfitters.	6.8%
4	printers.	5.5%
3	textiles.	4.1%

3. a. The questionnaires reported that, up to date, at these 73 firms there were 881 jobs in the Zone. The following figures show at which level these jobs were:

300	skilled manual.	34.1%
177	unskilled manual.	20.9%
149	managerial.	16.9%
127	routine non-manual.	14.4%
75	professional.	8.5%
53	supervisory.	6.0%

b. Out of these 881 jobs, only 311 people (35.3%) from Salford were actually employed in the Zone.

c. 178 extra jobs have been created since the first firms began operating in the Zone, an increase of 20.2%. These jobs were as follows:

117	in new firms or branch openings.	13.3%
61	in relocated firms.	6.9%

The Action Group predicted that the Zone would attract warehousing and service sector industries, which would not offer large numbers of jobs. This is just what has happened, many of the firms only employ as few as six people, some just one or two. Out of the total of 881 jobs in the Zone at the end of June 1984, 304 jobs were for unskilled or routine workers - 177 being for unskilled workers and 127 for routine workers. Of these 881 jobs, just over one-third of these were filled by residents of Salford. Of the 34 new firms starting in the Zone, there were 394 jobs, of these only 132 were filled by Salford residents. Once again, just over a third of the total number of new starters.

The main aim of the Salford Enterprise Zone was to reduce the number of unemployed in the area. This in fact has not happened, indeed, the numbers have continued to rise. The main jobs in the Zone are for professional and managerial staffs and skilled workers. The unemployed in the Salford area are mainly unskilled workers.

Many of the events that have happened so far in the Enterprise Zone, the Action Group foresaw four years ago. At the public meetings held with residents of the Weaste, Docks and Ordsall areas during early 1981, when the Zone proposals were published, local councillors stated that the Enterprise Zone would help to reduce the large unemployment figures in Salford. Now three years into the scheme and only 35.3 percent of the jobs are filled by local residents. The residents also stated at public meetings, that none of the firms would be labour intensive. The survey results prove that this is true. Many of the firms only employ two, three or four people. It was also stated that firms would relocate to the Zone from other (often local) areas, to take advantage of the Enterprise Zone benefits, this is what has happened. All the firms in the Zone benefit from a ten year rate free period, but many of the firms have complained that the rents

in the Zone are much higher than those in the surrounding areas, outside the Zone. The higher rents seem to cover the rates with the high price.

One item that has shown up in the survey and reports from other sources is that the price of land and rents in the Enterprise Zone are much higher inside the Zone than in outside areas. The main benefits that the Enterprise Zone has brought has been to the property developers. Rents are appreciably higher inside the Zone to take account of the rate relief, so encouraging property development schemes.

(2) UNEMPLOYMENT IN PINEHURST: BREDA BROWN AND MADELINE TANNER (1987).

Whilst carrying out our initial research into the social history of Pinehurst, we began to discover indications of poverty within the estate and became aware that Pinehurst could indeed be called a community in crisis.

We decided to put our theories about high levels of unemployment and dependence on state benefits to the test by conducting a survey. The method of survey used was a questionnaire conducted by the interviewer consisting of closed-ended questions. Shortly before the interviews took place, we delivered letters of introduction to each household explaining the purpose of our survey, promising anonymity and asking for the householder's co-operation, together with letters of endorsement from Ruskin College. The area chosen to be surveyed was a specific enumeration district. We excluded from our survey fifty Category 1 elderly people's dwellings, since to include them would have given a disproportionate bias towards the retired age group.

TABLE 1

Total number of households in enumeration district.	156
Excluding number of Bungalows.	50
Total number of households approached.	106
Unoccupied properties.	2
Unable to make contact.	3
Bereaved family.	1
Not interested.	8
Total number of positive responses.	92

The survey carried out on 92 households gave us information concerning a total population of 306 people.

Employment Data.

For a number of years unemployment in Pinehurst has been increasing steadily. As far back as 1971, the male unemployment rate was 4 percent when the borough average was only 2 percent. Ten years later the rate of unemployment was still twice the borough average, although both figures had risen dramatically to 17.3 percent and 8.9 percent respectively.

The following three tables give a general outline of the employment situation we found in our survey area in 1986.

TABLE 2

Number of Economically Active* persons:

Male	69
Females	65
Total	134

* Economically Active refers to those people of working age who are either working, temporarily sick, or seeking work. It does not include those either under 16, retired, in full time education, permanently sick or not seeking work.

TABLE 3

Number of EMPLOYED persons:	Male	47	68.1%
	Females	29	44.6%
	Total	76	56.7%

(Including 4 temporary workers, 3 self employed and 17 part time workers).

TABLE 4.

Number of UNEMPLOYED persons:	Male	22	31.9%
	Female	36	55.4%
	Total	58	43.3%

NB: Those classing themselves as unemployed include a number of women who would be willing to take up employment should it fit in with their childcare responsibilities.

Male Unemployment.

Pinehurst was once the home of many of the town's skilled and semi-skilled railway workers. Many of these men found

alternative work in the light engineering and motor industries when the railworks began to decline. Over the last decade however many of these companies have streamlined their staff or shut down altogether and this has led to a real shortage in skilled and semi-skilled manual work. The recent growth in the hi-tech industries and the increase in the number of firms basing their administrative headquarters in Swindon has provided employment for white collar workers but has failed to bring work to those men whose experience lay in the engineering industry.

Our survey indicates that male unemployment in Pinehurst has increased substantially since the census in 1981. This may be due in part to the massive redundancies brought about through the closure of the British Rail Engineering Works in March 1986, six percent of which struck the Pinehurst area.

TABLE 5

Trend of MALE UNEMPLOYMENT:

	Thamesdown Area 1981.	Pinehurst Area 1981.	Survey Area 1986.
Male Un-employment.	10.3%	20.5%	31.9%

Female Unemployment.

Unemployment amongst women in Pinehurst is also on the increase. The numbers of women in full time employment have fallen by nearly half. (See Table 6).

The increase in unemployed women is probably not as great as it would appear in Table 7. The 1981 census figures are artificially low, firstly because of the design of the census form itself which classes married women as 'housewives' (implying that their duties lie within the home). Secondly, the forms are generally filled in by the male householder, who by classifying his spouse as a housewife, gives the impression that she is not seeking work when she may indeed be actively looking for work outside the home.

The indications are, nevertheless, that more and more women are looking for paid work out of economic necessity and this is reflected in our findings, with 55.4 percent of women classing themselves as unemployed.

TABLE 6

Number of women working in:

	Survey Area.81.	Survey Area.86.
a) Full time employment		
Married.	5	4
Single, Widowed or Divorced.	16	9
Total.	21	13
b) Part time employment		
Married.	12	12
Single, Widowed or Divorced.	1	4
Total.	13	16

TABLE 7

Number of UNEMPLOYED women:

	Survey Area.81.	Survey Area.86.
Married.	2	21
Single, Widowed or Divorced.	3	15
Total.	5	36

NB: The 1981 census figures exclude 'housewives' seeking work from the Economically Active category.

Long Term Unemployment.

Long term unemployment has reached a crisis level in Pinehurst. One of the most telling results to emerge from our survey is the depressingly high rate of long term unemployment.

TABLE 8

Length of time unemployed persons have been out of work:

a)	Less than 1 year.	17	29.3%
b)	1 to 2 years.	9	15.5%
c)	2 to 5 years.	14	24.2%
d)	Over 5 years.	18	31.0%

A staggering 70 percent of those unemployed have been out of work for more than a year (an incredible 30 percent of all economically active persons). Over half (55 percent) have been unemployed for more than two years, and almost a third (31 percent) have been on the dole for more than five years.

This grim picture of long term unemployment is only one of the indications of financial hardship experienced by people living on the Pinehurst estate.

(3) THE MYTH OF THE VILLAGE COMMUNITY: SHELLEY BENSON (1986).

At the start of my project I had great expectations of being able to learn many things about the people in the village I had chosen to live in. I had hoped to establish reasons for the decline in many of the village's past groups, clubs and social activities. As a previous town dweller I was not wholly prepared for the animosity I met when attempting to speak to the local people (even about the weather) so when I began to ask inquisitive questions people thought I was prying. I knew I would need more than just curiosity - it would need sheer determination. The silence needed to be overcome and I gambled that this could be done by sending out questionnaires.

A total of 150 questionnaires were distributed by hand, with a letter of explanation to every household in the village. I set a two week time 'limit' for returns to ensure a steady flow of completed forms and, within two weeks, I had received more than I could dared have hoped for. I firmly believed that as the local shop and Post Office acted as collectors for the completed questionnaires, it helped by giving the project a village seal of approval.

From the collated information, I identified areas which I felt warranted further research, such as lack of transport and medical services. But, by far, the most striking was the apathy to be found in almost all quarters of the village. I sought reasons to blame the Town Hall bureaucrats for this, but it wasn't long before I had to ask myself if it was the attitude of the villagers themselves that allowed such a decline.

There was a time when everyone knew everyone else and no one had locked their doors. Voluntary agencies weren't needed. The villagers depended on each other for almost everything. There was nothing you didnt know about everyone in the village and help could be had even without asking. In the past two or three decades, with newcomers buying up large new properties, speaking a different language and trying to soak in a 'country image', these slow, easy going people have retreated into their homes only mixing with those they have tried and trusted. Gone are the days of welcoming a newcomer with hot tea and fresh bread. It is difficult to establish whether or not the apathy is just plain country laid back easiness or a genuine effort to keep the village to themselves. There is an acceptance of the death of various activities just as they accept the death of the elderly - much missed, but gone for good, sums up the general attitude.

A local woman started a Youth Club for the village children but through lack of support, from both kids and parents alike, it was closed down. It appeared that the youngsters were not accustomed to 'organised leisuretime' and so became slightly troublesome. No one has ever bothered to revive any form of social club for the youth in the village since. A thriving Womens Institute met its death from lack of support and several disagreements on how a WI should be organised. Once bitten, twice shy - again no one has ever attempted to restart the WI.

A unanimous opinion expressed by a number of locals was that when new faces came into the village, they wanted to inject new ideas and start new clubs in such a hurry. Little wonder, say the locals, after all they will move out again in a few years. I think I was being told that there was almost a subconscious effort, on the part of the villagers, not to join in if it meant new ideas for fresh initiatives.

The popular image of a rural society as a close knit, caring, sharing community makes solutions to problems hard to implement, especially when changes have been taking place in the character and composition of rural populations. Local solutions are either unevenly selective in nature or non-existent. As a resident of one of these beautiful areas, I know that something could be done. But like most I will probably sit on the fence and die with my ideas rather than face the slamming door, or do as the rest - move away.

In the village there are divisions. There are very definite separate communities in the one whole. Different corners never meeting in the middle. Sadly, it was generally accepted by most of those who were willing to talk to me that the close knit image of this community is but a myth.

(4) THE NEEDS OF ASIAN GIRLS: DOROTHY CLARKE AND RAZIYH SACRANIE (1986).

In attempting to meet the two aims of the project - ie. taking a fresh look at the needs of Swindon's Asian Girls and reviewing the work of Jagriti Mandal - two different approaches were necessary.

a) The School Questionnaire.

A questionnaire was prepared and contact was made with the heads of three secondary schools in Swindon. Two heads agreed that we interview girls in their schools on a voluntary basis and during school time. Interviews were set up with the help of the multicultural teachers in the schools. A total of 74 Asian and Oriental girls were contacted by letter to take part in the survey, out of which 57 volunteered.

The girls were interviewed in groups of four or five.Each interview took between one and a half hours and two hours. Detailed discussion took place before and after the girls filled in the questionnaire. We also encouraged the girls to raise any queries they had while they wrote down the answers.

b) Discussion Groups.

An attempt was made to encourage the girls to discuss issues concerning their careers, home life and spare time interests etc. Discussions were held with the Jagriti Mandal group and the two school based lunchtime groups.

Information gathered from these discussions was recorded and although of an unsystematic nature is important enough to be included in this report. Forty-five girls were seen in this way.

Therefore, a total of 100 girls were involved in interviews through the questionnaire or discussion groups.

Language.

When we designed the questionnaire, we listed English and five Asian languages and asked the girls to tick which ones they spoke, read and wrote. To our surprise, French is the next major language studied after English. We never thought of it as being so, but because it is taught in school it is read, spoken and written.

If Punjabi or Urdu or other languages were being taught in the school, we would have the students leaving school with a much greater understanding of and respect for their language. If this can happen with French, as we have seen, then it can happen with other languages.

Some of the girls said that if a girls' group were set up for them they would like language classes to help them become more fluent in their mother tongue.

We have also found that all the girls we interviewed speak their mother tongue, although not all of them speak it fluently. About 48 percent of the girls read their mother tongue and a few less write it. This seems to indicate that it would help them to communicate better with their parents, some of whom do not speak English fluently and some who do not speak English at all. The girls were not very keen to attend the Urdu or Punjabi classes already running, as they were at the wrong times and are mainly aimed at boys and very young girls.

Although three of the Muslim girls stated that they could read Arabic, it might be more accurate to say that these girls can

recite the Quran. The girls are taught the Arabic alphabet and then taught to recite the Quran.

Some of the girls mentioned that teachers mispronounced their names, eg. Sarah for Saira, Karen instead of Kiran. This further diminishes their sense of identity and self worth.

Dress.

Our interviews show that many Asian girls feel embarrassed when they wear traditional clothes in the company of their English peers. During an interview introduction session where twenty-three girls were being introduced to the new full time worker of the Asian Girls and Women's project, much comment and amusement was created by the traditional dress the worker was wearing. Discussion led us to believe that being different from the other school children causes feelings of embarrassment and alienation.

How can Asian girls be Asian outside of their community in the face of what must be powerful forces to conform to the 'norm' at school? This need to conform may result in the name-calling and teasing that happens in both the lunch time and Jagriti Mandal groups. The more vocal members of the group inflict on their peers abuse used by whites for degrading Asians. This acceptance of the dominant culture's view of them serves to reinforce the negative view they have of their own culture.

The Asian culture and religion require that dress should be modest and, therefore, shorts and bathing suits are not considered to be proper dress. Of the girls interviewed, twenty-seven enjoyed taking part in some form of sport, badminton, hockey, netball, volleyball. However, thirty of the girls interviewed, including all nine of the Pakistani Muslim girls, did not take part in sport, the need to wear kit was expressed as the main reason. We later found that the school permitted the wearing of track suits. Whether the girls were unaware of this or they are simply using their cultural norms as a way of avoiding sports, we don't know. Whatever the case, this represents a problematic situation which appears to have gone unchallenged and put to one side.

Activities Within School.

We found that 50 percent of the girls are not participating in many school activities such as swimming, trampolining and outings because provisions are not being made for female-only sessions. School outings and field trips in co-educational schools do not provide single-sex alternatives. Therefore, girls who come from strict families are not given the necessary permission by parents to attend. We were told of two Muslim girls in particular who are walked to school daily and picked up by their father. In a

case such as this it is unlikely that these girls would get permission to stay after school for activities.

The Asian girls group that was set up by Thamesdown Council for Racial Equality in October 1985 as an after-school activity group for girls at Commonweal School had very low attendance. Out of a possible thirty-one girls at the school, the maximum ever in attendance was ten, but usually only three or four came.

Subsequently, the time was changed to lunchtime and there is now a better response from the younger age group, who appear to benefit from a girls-only group. The support and involvement of female teachers in the school would help in providing the sporting needs.

Career Guidance.

The multicultural teachers of the two schools explained that there were special career subjects for the fourth and fifth year students. These students have the opportunity to do a week's work experience. The careers advisor who is linked to the schools explained about the JILCAL and the CLIPS system which is an assessment and information service provided for fourth and fifth form pupils. Interviews by the careers advisors are also carried out if the pupils ask for an interview or are referred by their tutor. The careers advisor also informed us of a new service called BTOPS. This involves parents and pupils meeting to discuss the careers of their daughters in traditionally male-dominated occupations. However, we were informed that at both the schools the Asian girls required a great deal of encouragement to make use of this facility.

We spoke to four girls who have decided what career they wish to follow but who feel that they are not being given any career guidance. They are not taking subjects relevant to their career choice. Two who were taking the relevant subject, Computer Studies, were not being encouraged by teachers to follow it up after school: (ie. not being told who to go to, work experience, how to continue their studies in the subject after leaving school).

One girl remarked, 'They always aim low for me and see me as a dumbo'. When asked if she gets encouragement and advice from her parents she said, 'My parents tell me to do what I like'. Another student has decided on the career she wants to follow. She had no idea of how to enquire further and was not studying subjects relevant to this career. Her mother wants her to go to the New College. The girl in question said to be, 'But they only take brainy people there...' A well known factory based in Swindon came to the school to discuss careers in the factory and one girl said she would probably work in that factory because 'The money is good there'.

We spoke to another girl who expressed a keen interest in further education, but her family want her to leave school and get a job. She is now looking for a job in one of the Swindon factories.

While we have only referred to a few cases we do feel that they represent some of the attitudes and problems being experienced by Asian girls in viewing their future careers.

Recommendations.

For all schools:

- To include the study of different religions in the school curriculum.

- To recognise and celebrate ethnic and religious festivals throughout the year, in addition to Christmas and Easter, etc.

- To introduce mother tongue teaching into schools. Give support to children who want to learn to read, write and speak their mother tongue fluently.

- To liaise with families on a regular basis regarding sports clothes (eg. tracksuits could be worn, single sex swimming sessions for the girls at local sports centres). To tackle the problem of name calling much earlier on.

- To ensure that teachers adopt the correct pronunciation of Asian names.

Careers.

- For careers workers to be aware that Asian girls and parents may not be quick to come forward. They may need to make the first approach if these girls are not to miss out on the opportunities available, especially in occupations which have traditionally been for men.

For the Youth and Community Service.

- To recognise that the Asian Community have got clear and defined cultural needs. Parents are still fearful of the traditional youth clubs. When thinking about youth in Swindon they should be making provisions for Asian girls during school hours and evenings.

- To make funding available for group leaders to make contact with parents.

- To assist finacially towards the running costs of girls' groups.

(5) WOMEN IN NEED: SPRINGS ESTATE WOMEN CENTRE (1987).

The Springs Estate Women's Centre aims to help the women of the area to meet their Educational, Social and Health needs. These needs, both perceived and expressed, have been identified by talking to women living in the area and through contact with workers providing personal support services.

The Springs Estate has a high percentage of young single women with children, many of whom are in upstairs flats which makes going out with puschairs and young children a stressful experience. Women also complained about the lack of play areas for children. The one and only play area on the Estate is littered with glass and so mothers are reluctant to let their children play there. Also due to increasing numbers of break-ins and vandalism, women on the Estate are frightened to go out. Concern was expressed about the growing drugs problem, on the Estate which leaves women in fear for their childrens well being.

The main complaint, however, was that women felt that nobody cared about them and their situation, because all the support services are located in the middle of Bury. As a result of the survey a group of women from the area formed a steering committee with a view to setting up a centre for women on the Springs Estate.

The centre would be a place where women could drop in at any time and where women could gain confidence in themselves by getting together to discuss their needs and discovering ways of fulfilling their needs. We would welcome the chance of working with professionals and moves have been made in this direction, ie. social workers, health workers, welfare advice workers, youth workers etc.

The centre would be a place where childcare facilities would be available for the women users. In the long term it is hoped that, in co-operation with Education Services, the centre could provide courses for women to enable them to learn new skills and increase self confidence. We see the centre as providing a much needed starting point to their lives; to reassess their potential, educationally and in job prospects.

(6) WHY WE WANT A CENTRE. SILAS KHAN (1987).

There is no provision for Asian language classes in local schools in Swindon. A lot of Pakistani children want to learn their language and the numbers are growing. We have not got our own Centre, where we can organise our Urdu language classes, so

we use a classroom in a local school during the evening and on Saturday morning.

We are using the classroom which is used by the school during the day for teaching. The classroom does not reflect the Muslim culture and does not help the children. No pictures or words are on the walls, instead English is seen and displayed. We have forty children learning Urdu in one class. But they are at three different levels and I have to split them into three groups in one class, this is very difficult for the teacher and the children.

We have to teach the children in the evening and on Saturday morning. We cannot have the classroom on Sunday or during the holidays when more time would be available, because the schools are closed. We can see learning Urdu is extra pressure on the children as they must be tired from school and have to start learning again in the evening. For this reason we think Urdu should be taught in the schools.

We receive very small amounts of funding. Only a few hundred pounds to buy books and materials, expenses and booking the hall during the holiday period. We are unable to employ a teacher because we have no funding. The number of children wanting to learn Urdu is growing, but we cannot take on more as the facilities are inadequate and there are not enough teachers who can teach on a voluntary basis. Apart from the difficulties of premises, materials and funding are needed to improve the teaching skills through training.

Even if we get language classes to be introduced to schools there is still a need to provide classes for the infants and other sections of the community. We would also want to introduce traditional poetry classes for the development of our culture as well as nazzams, and cultural songs. Only in a Centre can we arrange all of these things. The language classes have not only educational function, but also social, cultural and religious development of our own way of life for the children who are born in this country, to be aware of our own traditions and customs, to be able to overcome the difficulties they face when they go to visit their country of origin for holidays. It is also important for them to communicate with their relatives.

If we have our own Welfare/Cultural Centre we can organise functions and cultural programmes for the wider community to attend. By doing this people will come to understand our culture and hopefully we understand each other and live peacefully.

CASE STUDIES.

(7) AN EXPERIENCE OF ORGANIZING: DOREEN MITCHELL (1987).

It all started in November 1985. There had been some unrest in the area over the past few weeks, the elderly were afraid to go out at night and then it all seemed to blow up. The youths armed themselves with knives and air guns. They shot up an Asian taxi firm who, in turn, organised a fleet of taxis to drive in convoy around the area, looking for the youths. The youths even turned off the power supply at one of the generator stations, putting a lot of houses in the dark. Some of the residents called a meeting with the police to find out what their rights were, they did not want the police to lock up these youths as that was not helping them. We then had a meeting with a local councillor, he suggested we get a petition up for recreation facilities and we collected over 1,000 signatures. Our councillor then handed the petition in to the Town Hall. We then organised ourselves into a committee, our aim being to try and get a community centre in this area.

We held a public meeting and the committee was voted in, but this is where we made our first mistake. We allowed our councillor to become Vice-Chairman and we did not realise that this would be a drawback until we applied for a grant. We were and are a non political group, but because we had a councillor on our committee no one wanted to know. Then it became obvious to us that our councillor was not pulling his weight on the committee, so he was asked to resign. It was then things began to move for us.

We did not know much about committee work even though I had been on a committee before, as on my last committee there was a community worker who wanted to do everything which kept us in the dark. I then hadn't done any committee work for three years, so I was going into it not completely ignorant but not knowing who to go to. We had to start from scratch. I went to the Town Hall to talk to the youth service and as I sat waiting to see one of the top men I was whisked away into a big room to meet another councillor who was willing to help. I still can't get over how fast things began to move for us then. I was introduced to several people who could help us and a meeting was arranged for us with various people in the Town Hall for us to put our case. They were very sympathetic but kept trying to put us off, but the more they tried to put us off the more determined we became.

Then one of our committee members spotted an advert in the local paper, offering a timber building free to any organisation willing to move it. We beat all competition and got this building. It was 18 x 21 and was ideal as a temporary building. We contacted the Town Hall and asked if we could erect it. The

members of the recreation department came out to inspect the site where we wanted to put it. They were not very happy about the building but, to cut a long story short, after more meetings we got a promise that we would have a permanent building of our own! As it would cost a lot to put up the temporary building we decided to wait for a permanent one. So, after twelve months of forming a committee, we were allocated money and promised a community centre. It will be started in July 1987.

Our work is not finished. We meet once a month and raise money for printing, stamps, phone calls, petrol, and save money for when our building is opened. Our project now is to try and get groups together. We have started football and netball teams. Again, we don't know how to organise these groups but we are learning. We have our own community bobby who takes some of the boys for football practice and a girl who will train the girls for netball. We still need assistance and we learn as we go along. It has helped with me knowing a little bit about it, and forming the committee resulted in us gaining respect in the Town Hall, for our organising and our determination. We now have good contacts. We still like to do things for ourselves so that we get the experience.

(8) SUDS: A WOMENS CO-OPERATIVE: MOIRA MEDATI, EDIE FRAIN, BERYL LOWERY, FREDA THOMPSON, LIZ PANTON (1987).

The Estate.

The launderette is in the middle of a housing estate which consists of high rise flats and houses. The flats are multi-storey, some are four stores high with deck access, but others are twenty-two and sixteen floors high. The houses are mainly two up and two down in terraces.

Historically the local council have provided laundry facilities, eg. "The Wash House" and bathing facilities in the public baths. These facilities disappeared when the new estate was built and each household was provided with its own bathroom. Eventually the old baths were knocked down and replaced by a modern swimming pool and the "old wash-house" was replaced by a modern shiny launderette.

The launderette was opened in 1978, and eight years later the Council gave the community one week's notice of its closure on 7th April 1986. They said the launderette was uneconomic, and were not concerned about the way their decision presented difficulties for the local community.

The group identified two particular problems which they recognised as being fairly general and which gave impetus to their idea for a community launderette:

1. People living in high-rise tower blocks have no drying facilities for drying wet-washing. Forced to dry their wet washing indoors, they were then experiencing problems of condensation in their flats.

2. The low benefits upon which so many people in the estate depend, make it difficult for them to buy washing machines. People on benefits do not have easy access to reasonable credit facilities.

These were the two issues which convinced us that there was a need for a Local Community Launderette.

SUDS - What is a Workers Co-op?

A worker's co-operative means that the business is owned and controlled by the people who are doing the work. No one from outside the co-op can give direct orders or make decisions for the co-op. It means one person, one vote. No worker, ie. co-op member, can have more control than another. No one benefits more than their workmates. You join on a £1 share and if you leave that is all you can take away with you. The success of the business depends on co-operation of its members. Membership of the co-op is open to everybody who works in it once the probationary period is completed. The success of the co-op will depend on the members who have the power to make decisions.

The Benefits of being part of a Workers Co-op.

> 'Starting a business on your own may be difficult because of limited funds or lack of skills. In a workers co-op you can share these things.'

Co-ops vs Conventional Business Practice.

> 'Working for yourselves is more satisfying than working for a conventional employer.'
>
> 'It is more satisfying to work for yourselves because you have more control and say about working conditions and what happens to your product or service. You can work your pants off for a conventional employer for a wage that may only change once a year, while he takes the perks and the profits.'
>
> 'Bosses may have had the initial idea and the money to set up in businesses, but the work the employee does is just as valuable. In a co-op everybody's skill is recognised, and rewarded equally.'

Why a Women's co-operative.

'We found an all women's co-op to be our 'ideal' of work.'

'As a group we can all appreciate the problems which women with families experience when they try to do paid work.'

'For example we all know the problems created by school holidays; time off for visits to the dentist, measles, chicken pox etc.'

'In our group three of us have young children. The most recent addition being James. He was conceived, carried and produced during the birth of our Co-op.'

'Consequently as a group of women working together, we no longer have to face raised eyebrows or 'tutting' when one of us needs time off, or has to change our shift. We no longer need to feel guilty as we would with a 'normal' employer.'

'We feel easier working with an all women's group. We don't have to prove anything. We accept each other more easily for what we are. We laugh with each other and not at each other. We gain confidence from each other. We seem to be able to show praise and appreciation much easier than men and don't get embarrassed about saying we're pleased with each other.'

'As a group working together, we are able to set our own working conditions and have more control over our wages.'

Many women have experienced bad working conditions and low pay in menial employment - eg. bar work, catering, cleaning, shop work.

'Three years ago I worked five nights a week, 5.30pm to 8.30pm cleaning offices for £13.15p a week - £1.14p per hour. There was no sick pay, no insurance to cover for accidents or injury, no holiday pay, no maternity pay.'

'If anyone was off, you were expected to cover the work but for no extra money. The Supervisor collected the wages of the absent worker.'

Like most women we already had many of the skills needed to run a business. We just needed the opportunity to develop them.

For example:

Financial Management/Book-Keeping = Family Budgeting.
= House Keeping.
= Organising Birthday Cards.

Administration = Sending them out on time and to the right people (even his mother), arranging for repairs or breakdowns to be carried out, and paying bills.

Personnel Management = Peace Keeping.
= Arbitrating in Family Arguments.
= Nursing Sick Members of the Family.

Thousands of women carry out these tasks on a daily basis but nobody recognises their importance because they are not accompanied by a wage.

'Women themselves don't realise the skills they have and undervalue their 'housewife' role.'

Change - Conflict and Criticism.

During the twelve months leading to the opening of the launderette there were periods when the group could have folded. There were a number of reasons why this could have happened, eg. in particular there were family pressures causing individuals to reconsider their position in the project, and the periods when progress in setting up the launderette was minimal.

The group grew more confident as they prepared themselves for the responsibility of the co-operative.

Change.

'The experience has been good for all of us. For some it has had quite an effect on our domestic lives. Our families have to see we've changed!'

'Some people thought we couldn't complete the project. When we did there were changes in us.'

'We had undertaken training in skills and surprised ourselves at how well we had completed them. We had taken responsibility for 'the Business'. As a result we realised we were as capable as anyone.'

'In doing these things we had begun to question the way our partners treated us and what we expected/wanted for ourselves.'

Conflict and Criticism.

Women never win. Particularly on the issue of employment. If they do work they are called irresponsible. "You should be at home looking after the kids". If they don't work they are a drain on the domestic economy - "We could go on holiday if you got a job" etc, etc. As the Opening Day drew nearer, it became apparent that individual members of the group were facing resistance to the Co-operative on the domestic front.

- 'Towards the opening date we had all spent more time at the launderette. It was necessary, to finalise details and to complete the decorating.'

'The criticisms brought us closer together and we were able to console each other and afterwards laugh together.'

'This is what a Women's Co-operative should be about - giving, supporting and sharing.'

On successive mornings we each had a tale to tell about criticisms which our partners had made. For example:

'Who's going to take the dog out today, while you're down there?'

This comment was made by an able bodied man who was at home all day.

Another example of a negative response from a partner to a co-operator is illustrated below:

Co-operator	"Will you have the kids today? I'm decorating the wash house. There will be paint all over".
Partner	"I wanted to play football afterwards. Can't you take them with you"?
Co-operator	"But I'm going to work. You don't take them with you when you go to work".
Partner	"Your's isn't really working. You enjoy it".

New Confidence and Strength.

Another Co-operator with five young children wanted her unemployed partner to mind one child while she worked in the Co-op. He refused to get out of bed before she left the house.

> 'Rather than bringing the child with her as she had felt forced to do in the past, this time she marched up the stairs, and left the child on the bed with him'.

Six months before (she said) she wouldn't have considered such a thing. This demonstrates how members of the Co-operative have changed and gained strength and confidence from each other.

Practical Advice.

Looking back, the last twelve months have been very exciting for SUDS. The practical lessons which we have learned, and would like to share with other groups are:

- don't be afraid to ask questions of officials or agencies you may have to deal with;
- don't be disillusioned or disappointed if events take longer than you expect;
- do use local resources, ie. Law Centres, Employment Development Agencies, Local Councillors;
- do be bold in your requests - never under-estimate what you might need. The final figure or outcome will almost always be less than you asked for;
- do your homework when negotiating, and make sure you have all the facts necessary to support your case.

(9) BREAKING DOWN ISOLATION IN THE COMMUNITY: KEN WALKER AND CELIA MOODY (1987).

In the very early part of 1986 it came to the notice of the Community Centre staff that there was perhaps an area of loneliness in the lives of many people on the estate. Pursuant of this situation, the two groups - Living Memory and Memory Lane - came into being. The main aim is to bring people together in a congenial atmosphere of "sharing and caring".

The object of developing these now very active groups was to invite people to share their experiences of the past with each other, thereby possibly helping us all to understand behaviour patterns of our younger people, and perhaps generate a community

spirit in linking the past with the present. The reminiscence meetings are not being used as a vehicle' for lessons in history, but a means maybe of getting together all generations in the community. It is believed that by listening to each other expressing ourselves the more difficult individuals begin to feel accepted and develop a sense of self-value, treating each other with respect and dignity; this can culminate in far-reaching effects.

Character of the Meetings.

To give the reader some indication of what goes on at a typical meeting, this is as follows:

Videos and "still" pictures (the latter usually in the form of slides) are shown containing the chosen theme, for example: Lancashire Cotton Towns; Lancashire's popular holiday resorts, Blackpool, Southport, etc.

The films, photographs or a video, are usually followed by Margaret giving a topical and very interesting reading from a book. Margaret has a wonderful gift for reading and it generally makes everybody feel as if they are actually participating in the story.

The musical part of the proceedings then follows. One of the members is an excellent singer and entertainer and was a member of ENSA during the Second World War. The singer is accompanied by another two members of the group, one an organist and the other plays the piano accordion.

After the musical session with songs, usually of the time of the chosen theme, there is a short interlude for refreshments, tea, coffee and biscuits. During this time everyone has a little talk, mostly reminiscing about the old times, prompted mainly through the films and photographs they have just seen.

Following this a little quiz made up of two teams takes place, one half of the room versus the other, called A and B teams. A Question and Answer Book is available to lend authenticity to the competition. However, these quizzes are a source of great fun and a very enjoyable part of the proceedings.

After the quiz members are invited to relate any experiences they would like to share, this is always a lively part of the afternoon. It is truly amazing the wealth of material for discussion people have, and in the groups it is also enlightening in that people are willing to "share" their experiences. This is felt to be the key to success.

Before concluding the afternoon's programme the musical team entertains us once again and all join in the singsong; suddenly

it is realised the afternoon has gone all too quickly.

Some of the more common remarks one hears as the afternoon closes are: "Didn't the afternoon go quickly"? or "What are we doing next week"? More recently, following the showing of the video on "Street Games of Yesteryear", comments were heard such as "At last someone is coming up with something we want" and "Now, where else could we go for such an interesting programme". This, it is agreed, about sums it all up.

Involvement of Other Age Groups.

Just recently, a group of children from one of our local primary schools came along to share in one of our reminiscence afternoons, to play some of the street games of fifty or so years ago. This was a preplanned programme and BBC Radio (Manchester) being interested, came along to take some recordings. This resulted in a further dimension entering our project, emphasising an attempt to link up the young and the not so young, to the benefit of the community as a whole. In our rapidly changing society it was felt pertinent that perhaps a certain degree of animosity between the different age groups could be dispelled by helping us to relive our childhood, and possibly discover the many interests we do share together. It is entirely successful, the BBC referred to the programme as "bridging the generation gap". A video of this programme has been prepared.

Conclusion.

It is hoped that the aforementioned will have given a little indication of the work that is being achieved in the Living Memory/Memory Lane groups, with many hopes of their continuing success in the future. It is generally felt that the setting up of these two groups, the membership of which is expanding all the time, has opened up a completely new dimension to the lives of the people on the estate here at Hattersley. One cannot cease to wonder at the general uplifting of spirits, the enthusiasm and interest that has been evoked, and this has lead to a great deal of stimulation, especially among our more mature members. Emphasis is made on sharing and caring principles, each member contributes something of himself or herself to the Monday meetings, and their generosity in the face of adversity - as witness the story of quite a sick child for which a concert was being arranged, and the members who were unable to go to the concern contributed generous donations - was unbelievable. It seems to be generally believed that our members are beginning to look younger, fitter, and so much better and friendlier too. The children are truly appreciated and made to feel welcome (granted they are mainly in the charge of their teachers)! They certainly make a difference to the atmosphere and contribute to the geniality of the sessions. The outings are a real source of adventure too, and generate much discussion at subsequent

meetings.

(10) THE CLOSURE OF SWINDON RAILWORKS: RAY COZENS, ANDY TURNER, DANNIE CAMBURN, SIMON XAVIER (1986).

It might be of interest to note that 1986 had been designated Industry Year. The irony of that label will become apparent as you read this report. In spite of all the efforts of those concerned, including the members of this project, British Rail Engineering Limited continued with its plan to close a large part of its Swindon plant and make 2,000 people redundant by the end of March. We followed the week-to-week events of the last three months both from the political and the social aspects. Roy's involvement with the Railworks Defence Committee resulting in his joining the Labour Party, because of his own sense of outrage at what the political and economic forces had done to a long and honourable institution in our town.

At a time when the Government seemed to be doing nothing at all to alter the prospects for the long term unemployed, our involvement with Labour and the Swindon Unemployed Movement (SUM) seemed more important than ever because only in united action could we make people in authority take notice of the effects of decisions made in London or Derby by people who had little or no sympathy for Swindon. It must be mentioned here that during the 1960s - the traumatic Beeching years - there was a history of bad labour relations within the workshops, as jobs were lost following the axing of many branch line services. But since 1980 matters had considerably improved, with a dramatic turn round in production under the former Works Manager, Harry Roberts, who had originally been appointed to run the Swindon works down but had fought for its future before his departure.

But recently the workers had seen their industry and efforts gradually eroded away, piece by piece, in order to make it profitable enough to be sold off to a private buyer or buyers. Thus reversing the process of nationalisation in 1948 when Britain was still recovering from six years of war and needed cheap transport. The Tories had won again and the people of Swindon were paying the price.

Those last few weeks before the men left the Railworks were marked by much bitterness and a feeling of total impotence at being unable to prevent a major social tragedy. Bitterness by the doomed workers at the way they were being discarded in some vast industrial chess game like pawns. The fact that even after the economic arguments had been outlined, in a public enquiry, for retaining the Swindon works that BREL were deaf to all appeals to reconsider only increased the despair that many were now feeling.

The actual day of the closure had been set for March 31st but, because this fell on Easter Monday, it was decided that the redundant workers would finish on the 26th and the remaining workforce would break up on the 27th. The 26th must have dawned as one of the saddest days Swindon has ever seen. An appeal had been made, the previous evening in the local press, for the men to march out proudly for one final rally in the nearby park.

The media turned up in force, at the West Gate in Rodbourne Road at lunchtime, hoping to see some sort of a demonstration. But in the event it did not happen. The men left singly or in groups, either going home or having a farewell drink in the local pubs and clubs. For them it was the end of their longstanding working associations. It was these same pubs and clubs that would now be most hit by the loss of business due to the redundancies. Even the man who sold newspapers outside the Rodbourne Road gates for nearly fifty years would now no longer find it worth his while to take a pile of papers in the future, another example of loss of local business.

But the men's departure did not go unnoticed by the members of this project or the Central Ward Labour Party, who had helped to organise and steer the defence campaign. Earlier Roy, in consultation with union representatives and a member of the Thamesdown Law Centre, had prepared and printed a leaflet for the redundant men, giving information on the Swindon Unemployed Movement, its support of the campaign and locations for benefit advice, if they should need it in the future. Andy took some video shots for the project and Dannie, Simon and Roy handed out the leaflets. We could not distribute to everyone but, at least, we knew we had done what we could. There were two reasons why the men never staged a mass march and rally. The first was the fact that they felt so bitter and angry at the way they had been treated by their management and the second was that the traditional method of paying out final paypackets took so long that enough people did not leave together to form any kind of demo. It was a very emotional moment, as the regional television news coverage later showed.

So the long struggle ended with a whimper and not with a bang, testimony to the sad resignation of a workforce that had been sacrificed to a political ideology. At the end of that day's afternoon shift the hooter was sounded for a full five minutes, its familiar mournful sound echoing across the town as it had for generations of 'Swindonians'. A few people perhaps shed a tear, because it was now a part of history.

REFLECTIONS ON EXPERIENCE.

(11) ORGANISING A GROUP. MARGARET BAILEY (1985).

There are many situations that lead to local organisations setting up:

A few people on an estate get together to discuss the lack of nursery or other community facilities, or because they are affected by the need for repairs. They decide to take action and get other people involved.

Any group starting to organise must be absolutely clear about its aims. They should be spelt out from the start so people understand the issues and the purpose of the group.

If the group is to grow into one capable of meeting the needs of theneighbourhood a number of important things must happen at an early stage. Getting People Involved.

A good organisation is one which listens carefully to many local people and deals with the most pressing needs. The group should encourage everybody to develop their talents and interests to the full.

It is important that everyone's interests are taken into consideration by such a group. Too narrow a membership must be avoided as this can cause friction and be divisive. Each individual must be seen as having an important contribution to make.

All work and responsibilities should be shared by the whole group. Getting people to undertake tasks is crucial for if tasks are not shared, a few people will inevitably end up doing all the work, therefore becoming Experts in everyone's eyes. It creates a vicious circle in which few have too much to do and too much control whilst others are reluctant to challenge this situation and become resentful.

(12) FAMILY CENTRES: ANN DIXON (1986).

What can a Family Centre do?

A Family Centre should not be problem oriented. Although some professional workers see them in this role. Life is too short to have everything stressed on problems. Put it this way, you have got this poor mother who has a problem, her children are a problem and she can't cope with life. Along comes the Family Centre and she thinks, "Oh, this might be something".

The Family Centre takes her in, talks to her and helps her with her problems. At home, for her everything is focused on problems. She goes to the Family Centre to consult with somebody, she's talking about her problems, she is trying to find some way out of it. If a group of mums get together all they talk about is their problems. Why can't Family Centres, which I know some have done, help them to enjoy life?

They could teach them to look after their children, how to go and buy the cheapest but not the nastiest things. They can find toys in the cupboard out of all sorts of bits and pieces, they can learn that they can look out of the window and feel the air is free, the birds are there, the flowers and the sun. If the sun is coming out this is all good but also take the wind and the rain and the snow because that is all part of life and it can be beautiful, its all free.

I believe everyone is able to learn from each other, volunteers, workers and users. To be able to give as well as take, paid or not, makes people feel better with themselves. This is what a Family Centre should be like.

People don't need to sit down and accept a bad lot. I'm not ignoring the real problems which people face, but saying that people don't need to become overwhelmed by them. They need support in finding out if anything is available to help them and in maintaining their own pride and self awareness, so that they don't blame themselves. If there isn't anyone in paid work in a family, the members of that family haven't failed. They need support to be able to realise that.

A Family Centre in the long run belongs to the people. It's what the people want, this I think is the main thing. A Family Centre is there to fill a void in people's lives, to help them to learn about life, to help people to understand the stress and strain, to help them be aware there are happy times as well as sad times. To help people see that if Johnny is ripping the wallpaper off it's not because he hates you, he most probably doesn't know why he's doing it. He's probably angry inside for some reason and he needs to be understood. If Jo-Ann suddenly decides to smash a window for no reason and you get angry and lash out at her, you get hurt, Jo-Ann gets hurt. Is the problem really understood? No! There's ways and means to learn which I don't really know about but I know there are ways to understand.

The people in a Family Centre have to believe in themselves as well as the Family Centres they work in. They need to know why they want a Family Centre, what they feel a Family Centre can give to them and what they can give a Family Centre. The people that hold the purse strings also have to look at the Family Centre, not with £ signs jumping out of their eyes, or saying "Oh, we can do this, that and the other".

We can put money into projects in Swindon or Liverpool but to give some thought to the people involved and what they are working for, and consider how decisions at the top will affect people in a neighbourhood. In my experience, communication from the top level with the people at the very ground level does not happy very often.

If you are setting up a new Centre, here is a list of things to think of:

- What have you got?
- What can you offer?
- Why do you want to offer it?
- Do you know what you want?
- Can you get more?
- What will your rules be, how will people know about them?
- What is the structure?
- Do your people know any of the above?
- When doing publicity remember to have names, numbers(phone), addresses for contact.
- Be friendly, always welcome with a smile, make sure if new people come in the Centre the old people make the new welcome and try to let the old people know that this is what they have to do. Let the people know that it is there Centre so they have to keep it clean and if they have tea/coffee they have to wash up after themselves and make a small charge for drinks to help with the costs. Use what you have if possible so you don't keep on buying new. People are important. You are there for their needs as well as yours.

(13) THE PRESSURES ON VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS: LILIAN TIMMS (1987).

The Politics of Funding.

I would like to explain about the pressures on the Voluntary Sector and individual volunteers. Also it is important to point out the economic and social strains, with regard to the increased demands on the Voluntary Sector.

The major problems have been:

- Record high unemployment figures.
- Financial restrictions by Central Government on all services provided by the Local Authority.
- Major changes in the Social Security system.
- Increase in the number of elderly residents.
- Long term hospital patients being put back into the community.
- The closures of hospital departments, schools, nurseries and local shops.
- Run down housing estates.
- Constant updating due to legislation changes.
- The de-regulation of the buses.
- An increased demand for services that is being met by reduced resources.

QUESTION: What has been the result of the above changes, and how do they affect people in the community?

- Higher divorce rate.
- More mental illness and suicides.
- More people than ever trying to escape from reality by the use of drugs and alcohol.
- Increase in child abuse, often by parents who can no longer cope with the pressures of living in society today.
- More debtors in the community resulting in the need for more debt counsellors and credit unions.
- More need than ever for Voluntary Services.

Why do we need Voluntary Services?

- To meet the problems of the community by the community.
- To give people in communities self esteem.

- To take some pressure off the already over-stretched statutory services.

- To provide people in the community with help and advice, someone to talk to, somewhere to go, in a non-authoritarian atmosphere.

- To give people in the community something to be proud of.

- To bring people together by giving them a common goal.

- To set up self help groups.

My Hopes for the Future of the Voluntary Sector.

I hope that people in statutory positions see that the Voluntary Sector works hand-in-hand with them, to ensure a better service for the community which they serve. It would be marvellous if all the people working in the Voluntary Sector could be paid, but we know that the money is just not available at Local Authority level, when they are finding it difficult to keep community centres open. Thankfully over the past twelve months, councillors and members of the over-stretched statutory organisations, finally see that members of the community and voluntary sector are not merely playing at "doing-good", but are dedicated people who work harder than is expected of them to provide their community with the services it needs. By working together and sharing each others strengths, we can have a decent community life that everyone can share.

Tactics - Gaining and Maintaining Resources.

1. Always present a united front.

2. Have some central point of communication.

3. Get a big 'household' name on your side.

4. Use a two-pronged attach by the Labour Party and activists.

5. ORGANISE WELL PRESENTED PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS.

6. Lobby individual councillors, giving them all the facts and figures.

7. Get good press coverage.

8. Get individuals in the community to write to their councillors and local papers.

Personal Lessons and Reflections.

1. Remember you can influence Local Authority decisions.

2. If enough people have the energy, motivation and the will to fight closures, success is possible.

3. If enough collective pressure and representation is made people in Authority have to listen.

4. Never take "No" for an answer.

5. Learn to be optimistic rather than pessimistic.

6. To speak from the heart, rather than writing down what you want to say.

(14) WE NEED A NATIONAL HOUSING SERVICE: FRED WRIGHT (1987).

Any Government worthy of being returned to Parliament should have the courage to grasp the nettle of "Housing". This should be in the form of: Legislation to set up a National Body which controls housing both Private and Public.

This would mean that bodies such as Building Societies would come under the control of the National Body and other bodies (Banks etc) would be eliminated from the housing market. Todays programme is a shambles, a disgrace. On the one hand we have the Building Societies crying that they cannot get enough investment (£700-850m per month is needed), on the other hand we have Councils with income from the enforced sale of council houses who cannot invest the money on new buildings which is so desperately needed.

It would require a bold Government to attempt this, as the first requirement would be to "control" the city money men, and secondly, to make a huge cash injection into a central fund to service all housing requirements. The interest rate should be set at a reasonable figure (around 6-7 percent) and frozen for a period of something like ten years. This would allow buyers in the private sector to borrow at a reasonable and fixed rate and Councils to plan ahead with secure knowledge of what any future development is likely to cost them. As the rate of interest is set low private mortgagees would receive (or indeed require) no tax relief on the interest.

Public Sector Housing came into being (discounting the Slum Clearance Laws) under 1880 "Labouring Classes Dwellings Act". That name alone has done more dis-service to housing over the years than almost any other precept. The picture posed by the title of the Act has stayed. Even now,100 years on, Public Sector Housing is still envisaged as the "Housing of the Poor".

Why? Surely the man who applies himself industriously to his chosen occupation is worthy of shelter which is on a par with that accorded to the man who employs him to create new wealth for him, which allows him to drive around in his one of many large cars, or to ride to the hounds, or whatever takes his fancy, whilst the "Labourer" diligently applies himself to ensuring that he puts in a good day's work. To some extent this has been put right in the Scandinavian Countries, but in the UK no attempt has been made to equalise housing. Even on mixed estates (Public for Renting - Public ror Sale - Private for Sale) a short survey of the dwellings on these estates illustrates very clearly which houses are in which category.

We have now reached the stage in the UK where some really hard decisions have to be taken. In the 1960s it was all prefabricated housing or high rise flats. Expediency was the order of the day. Now, we are beginning to realise the cost, not only financially but also community-wise. Break up of family units etc, and the resulting lack of pride, well being and belonging. Should we spend the BILLIONS on repairing the crumbling system built flats and houses, or do we act boldly and say, bring in the bulldozers and start afresh? Whichever decision is taken, we must resolve to raise the standard of housing, to erode the built in barriers, and to recognise that humanity and all its feelings are more priceless than mere wealth. The days of paying lip service to a set of ideals must be ended, without the Labourers' there would be "No Bosses", without the "Labourers" there would be no "Wealth Creation".

It is frightening to think that if the 80/81 level of Housing Investment were maintained for ever, every public sector dwelling would have to last for about 900 years before it could be replaced. The number of dwellings completed in 1981 was 25,000, add to this that over 150,000 families registered as homeless in '81 and waiting lists expanded by roughly a quarter of a million in the past four years and the size of the Housing Problem begins to become clear. The deliberate clampdown on housing development was a criminal act when you remember that, house building is about 85 percent self sufficient. We could be self sufficient for Timber, Slates and Tiles are home produced. Glass needs very little imports, Bricks are made here and on top of that we have over a quarter of a million building operatives on the dole, in receipt of benefits when they too could be self sufficient by earning their income to fill this enormous gap. But, all this must be carefully controlled to ensure that we have learned from our mistakes of the past, and consultation must take place with everybody involved at every level from the Tenants up to the Designers and Planners.

Every future development must, before work commences on the actual construction, be planned to include community facilities for (a) the elderly, (b) the young, (c) older children, (d)

nursing mothers, all adequately funded and I would say controlled by the people who use them. (Tenants). Because of the fund of understanding amongst the consumers of Housing, (Tenants), they should be involved with every decision making process. From experience, the most popular and trouble free type of dwelling is the house with (a) brick cavity walls, (b) a pitched tiled or slate roof, (c) access to private gardens. Even flats should be constructed on these principles and flats should be limited in height to three or four storeys. Density of levels of all dwellings should be reduced and space levels improved. The final criteria is that all dwellings should face on to well lit, well maintained streets.

It must be legislated that the complete control of Housing Finance is controlled by a National Body composed of (1) A Minister of Housing (with no other responsibilities), (2) A Team of Designers and Developers, (3) A Flying Squad of Inspectors with Teeth to ensure that standards are maintained throughout the Country. (Whatever happened to Parker-Morris)?

Whilst acknowledging that it will be an enormous undertaking for any Government, it needs to be a complete package, not something that is fudged, but any Government that does take it on board will be worthy of the title. What we need is a "National Housing Service". Who will do it?

(15) PRODUCING A BROCHURE: ELLEN WHITTINGHAM (1987).

The initial idea for a brochure or video was not mine, it was a suggestion made by a number of our group, long before I attempted the Communities in Crisis course. But, like all potentially good ideas, it was shelved for a while in the hopes that someone would come up with the money to produce one or the other.

As there is so much going on in our area, most of our manpower was taken up in the general round of meetings and lobbying etc. Therefore, along with my duties as Neighbourhood Council Secretary and general pen and paper person, it was left to me to get the brochure on the road.

We had a committee meeting to discuss how to go about fundraising and our Community Worker suggested we contact Liverpool Council for Voluntary Services (LCVS) and ask them for help. After a number of letters to-ing and fro-ing, explaining our aims and the use we would have for the brochure on publication, I was invited to a meeting with LCVS. After reiterating our aims and objectives, LCVS agreed to intercede on our behalf to the John Moores Trust, one of Liverpool;s charitable organisations.

Again, after more letters, a meeting was arranged with a representative of the John Moores Trust, by this time I was

becoming word perfect at explaining what we wanted and why we wanted it. Finally, we were awarded the money to produce a brochure, with just a couple of reservations made by the backer. One, that we don't paint a totally black picture of the area, shades of grey and white had to be included. Two, that we don't produce something looking too extravagant looking and defeat the object, namely, as a fundraising tool for the running costs of the proposed adventure playground and other ventures.

Along with the money came even more welcomed advice, which was that we contact someone from City Planning to help with statistics etc. This proved to be invaluable.. We contacted a gem of a man who gave up a great deal of his free time to help us gather information, much more than we used in the brochure. Not only this, now he is an established contact and friend. We can get in touch with him any time we need help and advice. We held meetings both in the Victoria Settlement and at his office, sometimes as a group, other times I would meet him or write to him.

Our friend in City Planning in turn advised us to use a Community Printers called "Impact" to produce the brochure. He was familiar with their work and recommended them highly. I rang "Impact" and they invited us to an initial meeting. I must admit up to this point I was enjoying the round of discussions and meetings. Then came the hard work. We seemed to have endless telephone calls and meetings, and nothing seemed to be coming out of them. But, as with all new ventures, things began to click with me. And, as time was rolling on and I had side tracked myself a couple of times from the reality that I had to get some writing done soon, finally I was putting pen to paper. The main problem was organising my writing so I could get into the brochure, all I thought should be said, while not making it too long, boring or unattractive.

The printers could not have given us enough help with layouts etc, even offering to show us how to produce stuff ourselves. My biggest problem, funnily enough, turned out to be the photographs. It was a disaster on occasions. We tried to do it on the cheap. We borrowed a camera, a 35mm, from another local community group and bought some black and white films. I proceeded to take photographs of everything I thought was relevant, only to find out that the camera was faulty and that once the film was in, you couldn't get it out again. It had to be manhandled out with disastrous results. This thoroughly floored me because I had thought I was wonderful out there with my camera.

I took this problem to the printers who suggested we contact Bootle Arts and Action, a Community Arts Programme, who when contacted, said they intended to take some photographs of the area for themselves for an exhibition they were staging. On the

day the photographer came, he took a lot of photographs, some of which would have done us but mostly they were of the architectural and geographical beauty of the area, or of the slum clearance. Not totally what we wanted, I got in touch with them again and after a series of delays, like staff holidays and bad weather, we got some photographs we could use.

Now the writing and the photographs could be taken along to the printers, a series of meetings and debates went on, tons of photographs were discarded and I was asked to take the typset printout of the writing back to our group to be re-read.

Well, as in most community groups everyone just kept saying "fine", "lovely", no criticism at all, except maybe at the English used or the grammar. Also, when asked to correct it, no one volunteered, conveniently saying it would ruin the creative flow and such jocular remarks. On returning it to the printers, he agreed that if he made corrections it would read as though he had written it, though he made much needed adjustments to the "headings". Other than that it is unabridged.

Things were starting to come together at this point. We had chosen the "look" we wanted and the general layout, colour of type and paper etc, for the brochure. The next problem was the front and back covers. After more delay and a chance visit to the local vicar, a group member, spotted an old print of the area and asked him if he had a photocopy of it to spare. Armed with my new find, I went back to the printers. The printer was over the moon about the photocopy, hence the back and front of the brochure was taken care of.

More delays ensued and the "acknowledgements" and "title" had to be thought about. "Everton 84" came about because in the words of the brochure, Everton was in the process of being devastated once again to make way, this time, for a park and some housing. The front cover says it all, for the Everton of the 1984s could end up looking as it did in the 1884s or thereabouts, hence "Everton 84", take your pick which century.

Finally after a couple of false alarms like the boy who staples the brochures together being off work ill and unable to work on our brochure, we finally received the finished goods.

Everyone at our end seems pleased with the brochure. Anyway, they haven't said to my face if they are not, and they are a brave bunch. So I am inclined to believe them.

PART THREE: EVALUATION

INTRODUCTION.

In this section we review how the participants experienced the programmes, the practical use which has been made of the projects and the lessons we would draw out for the organisation and planning of project work with community groups. When addressing these issues it should be acknowledged that Communities in Crisis has normally operated without specialist research resources and has lacked the capacity to systematically explore and monitor the experiences of the participants and local groups. The limitations of funding have prevented the employment of staff with a research brief and, as a consequence, the evaluation of the programmes has been improvised on a rather ad hoc basis. In common with many adult education and community work programmes, Communities in Crisis has had to mainly rely on a variety of 'soft line' approaches to evaluation, using such techniques as impressionistic recording and opinion surveys.[12] These techniques have a considerable value in building up a descriptive profile of events and capturing qualitative insights into the experiences of the participants, but have limitations when it comes to assessing the outcomes of programmes. For instance, after six years of project based work we can only offer tentative hunches as to whether this form of participant centred learning is, in line with the pedagogical theory, likely to encourage participants to develop an "intrinsic orientation" to their studies and a "deep approach" to learning.[13] The only opportunity to explore this question systematically came when a Communities in Crisis initiative in Swindon and Oxford formed a unit in the Preparatory Education Project (PEP) and research resources were available to evaluate the motivation, study skills and learning approaches of a group of thirteen participants. A summary of this research, prepared by the former research worker with PEP, forms an Appendix to this report. In addition, feedback sheets and group meetings have revealed the ways in which learning has been effective and transferred from one situation or issue to another.

PERSONAL GAINS.

An increase in self confidence and self esteem has been frequently cited, by the participants, as being a positive gain from their involvement with the programme. This growth is expressed in both personal and organisational terms. At the personal level, some participants report feeling more assured and assertive in group situations and developing a renewed confidence in their abilities and potential. Strengths and talents have surfaced and this has had the spin off effect, especially in the North West, of encouraging a number of participants to move into other educational activities (eg. access and social work courses), or employment after the completion of a Communities in

Crisis programme.[14] At the level of organisational involvement, the gains are normally defined in terms of feeling more confident in dealing with "officials and professionals" and being more prepared to take on leadership responsibilities in local groups.

Confidence.

> *'I feel that not only my ideas but also my ability to express them has grown.'*
>
> *'We now have enough confidence and information to compete with the professionals.'*
>
> *'Communities in Crisis unlocked some doors for me and I feel that I have a lot more I want to give and pass on to others. I have not yet reached my full potential.'*
>
> *'I have gained confidence from working on the project. Previously I was a very shy person and reserved. I am now involved in setting up a women's cleaning co-operative.'*
>
> *'From the project I gained a lot of confidence in meeting professional people and in writing reports.'*

A growth in confidence is invariably related to a clear sense of achievement, which derives from completing the project work and a recognition that the experience has resulted in the development of skills coupled with a widening in knowledge. The skills most frequently cited relate to tasks associated with the process, preparation and production of projects; planning investigations, making contacts, collecting and collating material, analysing data and critically reflecting on experiences, writing reports, designing publications and displays, and working out strategies for the distribution and use of the material. In some cases, these communication, organisational and study skills are complemented by a newly acquired technical expertise in the use of video equipment, computors and word processors.

Knowledge, Skills, Awareness.

> *'We wonder if the 'C in C' programme realise the difference this project has made to our lives. We now understand the wider issues of employment (and unemployment), local and central government.'*
>
> *'In this project we have learnt much about historical research, interviewing, questionnaires, organising a public meeting and so on.'*

'The project has given us a lot of experience in different areas, such as how to approach organisations and local authority officers, how to put our points over in a clear and precise way. We have learned to plan and prepare and not be afraid of asking for help.'

'It's brought a new awareness to a lot of us, by talking to other people about their projects and how they are going about it. Learning about issues you didn't know about and learning about the crisis in communities that you weren't aware of.'

'I've actually been able to interview people, draw up a questionnaire and speak out in groups - which I've never done before.'

'I learned how to produce a book and how to collate it.'

Gains in confidence, skills and knowledge have been particularly evident amongst the women participants. The staff on the North West programmes have remarked that "in general the women have proved more free thinking, more creative and adventurous and prepared to take risks".[15] Risk taking has been apparent in the selection of the topics and issues for the project work. The majority of the women on the North West programmes, have undertaken project work which focused on immediate issues and felt needs which called for changes in services and the local environment and involved unpredictable negotiations with policy makers and resource holders. For instance, attempts at setting up a womens centre, a well womens clinic, a new community centre or a co-operative. In contrast, a number of the male participants have focused on topics which consolidated on existing material and experiences and involved less risky outcomes, such as the compiling of reports on campaigns and the production of information packs or guides to services. One factor, which may help account for this gender difference, is the socialisation produced by previous work and organisational experiences.

'The majority of the male participants had, until becoming unemployed, worked regularly over many years in traditional sources of employment which were organised in rigid hierarchical structures. They were used to being directed, instructed and responding to a rule-book and they were not normally expected to make creative decisions or to share ideas with a larger group in an informal way. In contrast the majority of the women in the programmes had not experienced institutionalised employment for any length of time. This was because they were bringing up children.'[16]

Getting out and about on the project work, meeting up at day schools and exchanging experiences at residentials have all contributed to a widening of knowledge and awareness. Participants and tutors learn through action, reflection and sharing ideas. At the same time, traditional educational methods - lectures, seminars, tutorials, guided reading, library visits - are selectively used to complement the ongoing process of the project work.

It is the residentials which are frequently highlighted when participants reflect on the value of the different elements in the programmes. The residentials provide an opportunity for group support, reviewing project work and having fun. They have formed an indispensable ingredient in all the Communities in Crisis programmes. In the first programme the residentials provided a common meeting point for the participants from the different regions and this coming together stimulated some lively exchanges of political views and organisational experiences. Visits to Oxford proved an eye opener to the participants from Merseyside and Salford - "where's the problems!" - while the reports from the North West groups came as a sharp reminder to the participants from Swindon and Oxford of the scale of regional inequalities and the harsh economics of the North-South divide. Since the first programme, funding problems have prevented the holding of shared residentials on a regular basis and lack of a sustained inter-regional link has diminished the learning experiences of both the participants and the staff.

<u>Residentials</u>.

'The weekends go a long way to prove that learning as an adult can be stimulating and fun, a far cry from the classroom.'

'I gained a lot of confidence from the residential and recharged by batteries.'

'I enjoyed the weekends and learnt a lot from other projects.'

'The residentials were so well organised. The worry was taken out of it.'

'Personal attention and interest was given to you and what you were doing.'

'The tutors were around all the time. Visible and accessible.'

'I made many new friends and useful contacts on the residential weekends. I also found it really helpful to get away from the family and be able to work without

any distractions. This was heavenly!'

PROBLEMS OF PROJECT BASED WORK.

Project work is time consuming, makes heavy demands on the powers of self motivation and can be unpredictable in its outcome. The feedback from the participants has highlighted several pitfalls and dilemmas. Frequently, the participants have found themselves devoting far more hours to the preparation and writing up of their projects than was originally anticipated by the programme organisers. The guideline of seven hours per week has often been exceeded two or three times over and finding the time can be fraught with problems, as participants juggle with the competing demands and pressures of the project work, family responsibilities and local community commitments. The length of some of the programmes, coupled with the relative infrequency of the day and residential schools, may result in participants having to undertake a considerable amount of work on their own and this can become an isolating experience if the support networks break down. The assumption that participants will work in pairs, and will receive back up support from local groups and tutors, has not always been translated into a practical reality. Members of project teams can drop out through illness or other reasons, local groups may prove unsupportive and the contact with tutors can sometimes be erratic. In these situations the participant can, not surprisingly, feel frustrated and demoralised.

Criticisms and Problems.

'We had problems setting up work times to cope with small children. There were difficulties in finding child minders and having to concentrate on discussion and writing, with children asking for attention.'

'I wish there had been more support for us when we were working on the project.'

'There was a lack of support which resulted in a long delay in getting my project finalised.'

'I feel that if we had had more support that we could have done more.'

'For me initially, the contact of others in the group was the inspiration, the stimulus to take on the challenge. But because one has had vast periods of isolation the challenge has diminished.'

'Being isolated from the other groups meant that I usually had to find the motivation from within myself, which, at times, proved very difficult.'

'I had doubts as to whether I should continue the project and have felt isolated from my own organisation, which has been very unsupportive. I've had to work mainly on my own throughout.'

Lack of time, inadequate support and the strains of working in isolation have, coupled with health problems, accounted for much of the drop out from the programmes. Some of these difficulties can be resolved by improved organisation. For instance, criticisms about tutor support on the first programme resulted in new staffing arrangements being implemented and the feedback from the participants in the later programmes, has been far more positive. But even the most carefully worked out support plans cannot cope with the impact which ill-health, poverty and domestic tensions can have on the participants, or the sometimes debilitating effect which deep seated fears and anxieties about "education" can have on their confidence and self image. The North West experience shows the significant improvement gained through employing a full-time worker. This is through both more sustained contact and cumulative network building amongst participants.

USE OF PROJECTS.

Project work was intended to produce benefits for the participants and generate socially useful knowledge which would provide a resource for the activities of local groups. The projects were not designed as academic exercises or as individualistic initiatives which were detached from a collective end product. What use has been made of the projects? For some groups the actual process of joining the programme acted as a stimulus for action and prompted the launching of a local initiative. Jackie Haworth and Sheila Bradwell of the Chesham Fold Tenants and Residents Association (Bury) describe how joining the programme prompted an investigation into play facilities on their estate.

'The Association has been involved with the Geoffrey Kershaw Youth and Community Centre for about two years and the warden of the Centre has assisted us in many of our activities. It was he who informed us about Communities in Crisis. For some time we had been concerned about the lack of play facilities for young children and, following a meeting, we decided to become involved in researching into this particular issue.'

The focus for this project developed naturally out of concerns which were shared by the participants and the local group. Involvement in the programme accelerated action and resulted, in the case of the Chesham tenants, in the production of a report which formed one strand in a successful initiative to establish

two play areas on the estate. For some participants the project work also acted as a spur for taking broader action, as a result of issues which emerged out of sharing experiences with colleagues and tutors on the programme. Breda Brown and Madeline Tanner redefined the scope of their project, after becoming aware of the implications of the Fowler Review of social security.

> *'Through our early work we began to discover some alarming facts about deprivation in parts of the Pinehurst estate and, with this in our minds, we attended our first residential weekend... We went to a lecture on Fowler's review of the welfare state and became aware how the proposals could have a devastating effect on the already hard hit Pinehurst community. With this knowledge in mind we decided, on our return from Oxford, to change the direction of the study by focussing on levels of unemployment and dependence on welfare benefits.'*

This change in direction not only resulted in redefining the scope of the project, it also prompted the participants to become actively involved in the Swindon Action for Benefits campaign.

> *'The alarming possibilities raised by the Green Paper on social security compelled us to organise a public meeting in Pinehurst. We wanted to open other people's eyes to what we were of, so that they could see how the changes to the benefits system would affect them.'*

All of the participants engaged in project work as an integral part of their ongoing activities and, as a consequence, were well placed to use the material gathered as a means for informing and supporting pressure group campaigns. Jean Seddon's survey of the Salford Enterprise Zone was used to challenge planning issues.

> *'In a residential area I discovered, by chance, that a company had applied for planning permission. My work on the project and the information collected was a key factor in heading off the company. I was able to give vital information to the solicitors representing the local community.'*

Using the projects as a means for lobbying and negotiating for resources has been a recurring feature of the programme. A number of the projects have been specifically written up as grant applications to local authorities, charities and trusts. Although establishing cause and effect in community work is rarely straightforward it can be claimed, with some confidence, that a number of the projects have formed one ingredient in producing tangible material improvements for local groups and neighbourhoods. Examples from the North West programmes include:

- *Funding for a community garden project on the Langley estate in Rochdale.*

- *Funding for the setting up of a Well Women's clinic and centre serving the Langley and Middleton estates in Rochdale.*

- *Improving safety standards on a section of the M66 motorway which runs through the Chesham Fold estate in Bury.*

- *Funding for a Womens Centre on the Springs estate in Bury.*

- *Funding for a Community Centre in Blackburn.*

- *Funding for a tool library at the Horwich Unemployed Centre in Blackburn.*

- *Grant aid towards the running costs of the SUDS co-operative in Salford.*

Finally, the project work has been used to share experiences within groups, between different groups in the programme and across wider regional and national networks. Within groups the projects have, at times, formed a focus for debate, reviews and the identification of new initiatives.

> *'Its made us more aware of what's happening in the area and has started us thinking of the possibility of setting up a steering group to open a family centre.'*

Apart from sharing experiences at day meetings and residentials, some of the participants have forged links which move beyond the formal contact points provided by the programme. Participants from different areas have established supportive networks.

> *'My experience with setting up and running the Salford Womens Centre has enabled me to give support and advice to the womens group in Bury, which is trying to establish a Centre on the Springs estate. I have been on regular visits.'*

The publication of reports (in some cases up to 400 copies have been printed), the showing of videos and the distribution of brochures have all contributed to feeding information and experiences from the project work into wider regional and national networks. The impact of this linking up has been enhanced when participants have been able to spread the word through personal contact.

> *'Our interest in unemployment and poverty, developed through our work on the project, has brought us into contact with hundreds of other concerned people from*

many groups active in the field - on local, regional and national levels. We have travelled, together with people from other groups in Swindon, to places as far afield as Newcastle and Exeter.'

Project work can act as a stimulus for local action, can broaden the scope of initiatives, can provide a means of lobbying for resources and supporting pressure group campaigns and can encourage the sharing of information and experiences within groups, between groups and across regional and national networks. Modest and small scale benefits when weighed against the structural forces which negatively shape the economic and social fortunes of many working class communities. But, at the same time, clearly suggestive of the potential which exists, the sparks which can be ignited and the creative energies for collective action which struggle, often neglected and devalued, on the margins of party politics and orthodox adult education.

ORGANISING PROJECT BASED PROGRAMMES.

What lessons and guidelines for the planning and organisation of project based programmes would we draw out from the experience of six years of Communities in Crisis? Ideally, programmes should be based on the following principles:

- *Close links and detailed negotiations with community organisations. This is essential if the project work is to reflect local priorities and inform future action. Participants need the confidence of their groups.*

- *There should be a mix of participants from different organisational backgrounds and areas. This is needed to challenge the parochialism and sectional interests which tend to characterise community work and adult education programmes which are exclusively single interest or single community based.*

- *The participants must be fully involved in the planning of projects and must exercise a control over the process and outcome of their work. The theory of "student centred" learning and a commitment to the "project orientation" model should inform the whole of the programme and should not be marginalised as an "exercise" which is tacked on at the end.*

- *The organisation of the programme should combine a mix of day and residential schools and tutor support between the events. The acid test for project based work is linking these elements - what goes on between events conditions the effectiveness of the overall process.*

- *Resources should be available to employ a development worker to anchor and co-ordinate the local work and to support the specialist tutors who work with the participants on the detailed aspects of their projects.*

Translating these principles into action can be fraught with difficulties. Links with local groups can be ruptured because of changes in membership and leadership; participants can be sidetracked by local in-fighting; disagreements can occur over the direction of projects and, in extreme cases of friction, groups may disown the results of the project work. The mixing of groups and participants can also generate tensions. Different organisational cultures can collide and conflicts may arise over whether class, race or gender constitutes the primary oppression.

The "project orientation" approach makes sustained demands on the personal motivation, time and commitment of the participants. For some, the demands prove too much and the personal gains prove too intangible. For others, finding the time to undertake the project work causes strains. In the planning of project work it needs to be clearly recognised that local leaders and volunteers often live in stressful environments, have family responsibilities and can play multiple organisational roles in their local communities. Maintaining involvement becomes more difficult if the support provided in a programme - especially support between set piece events - is erratic and unreliable.

Like all part time adult education programmes Communities in Crisis has experienced drop out, which has averaged around 20 percent for each programme. The reasons have included: illness, domestic pressures, lack of time, becoming over stretched with other community and political commitments, breakdowns in local group and tutor support and dissatisfaction with the lack of specific outcomes in terms of employment or access to further education.

Recruitment and Development Work.

Recruitment for programmes depends upon having close contacts with community organisations and having the capacity and commitment to engage in development work which will extend and sustain these contacts. In our experience there is always a tendency to underestimate and undervalue, in the planning and funding of programmes, the importance of development work in establishing links, building local confidence and tapping into networks. All too often funding bodies and educationalists, especially those who have little or no experience of operating outside of an institutional base, assume that students/participants come pre-packaged and that the "real" educational work only occurs in the lecture room, the tutorial

and when staff are marking papers.

Development work is the foundation for recruiting for project based programmes and it can - like "contact making" in neighbourhood work - be slow, time consuming and unpredictable in its outcome. The location, ethos and reputation of the promoting bodies can be a crucial factor in determining the ease with which links are established. In the Communities in Crisis programme the William Temple Foundation has been well placed to link with community groups, because it operates through a local base - Joint Action, Salford - and has been able to recruit via networks which are a natural part of the day-to-day work of its staff. In contrast, Ruskin College lacks a community base in either Oxford or Swindon and, as a consequence, has been more dependent upon establishing contacts through community workers and the personal and professional networks of the tutors on the social work course. Ruskin engages in outreach work, whereas the William Temple Foundation operates inside community networks. Of the two approaches, the William Temple Foundation model fits more easily into the needs and demands of project based education.

Once programmes have started the participants themselves can become contacts for recruitment. Links formed during a programme can open doors to new groups, ex-participants can spread the word and become actively involved in promoting new initiatives. In Swindon, members of the Unemployed Movement have played a central role in developing programmes and providing contacts for recruitment. Finally, there is the importance of removing the cost factor as a barrier to involvement. The majority of the participants could not have afforded - because of low income, unemployment and family circumstances - to have become involved without the sponsoring bodies underwriting the basic costs of the programme.

Staff.

The organisers and the core staff of Communities in Crisis type programmes need to be experienced in the politics and processes of community work and must be fully committed to a "participant/student" centred approach to adult education. In the first programme, six staff from the William Temple Foundation and Ruskin attempted to cover all the aspects of the process - organisation, development, participant support - in addition to their normal work. This policy had the virtue of saving on staff costs and enabling the maximum of financial resources to be devoted to supporting the participants, but ran the risk of the staff becoming overstretched and being caught by conflicting priorities. Problems did arise and, predictably, these were the most apparent in erratic and unreliable contacts with the participants between the day schools and the residentials. Several participants complained of feeling "isolated". Lessons were learnt and the later programmes have had different staffing

arrangements. The William Temple Foundation have employed a full time worker to anchor and co-ordinate the programmes in the North West, and Ruskin have supported the employment of a part time tutor/development worker for the programmes in Swindon. These appointments have not replaced the involvement of the William Temple Foundation and Ruskin staff, but have enabled them to be used in more specific and manageable roles. The results of these changes have been positive. The day-to-day organisation of programmes has improved and contact with participants has been more regular. Significantly, the drop out rate of participants has declined and the completion rate of the project work has increased. In addition to these staffing arrangements Communities in Crisis has been able to call upon the services of a wider network of adult educationalists, social/community workers, church workers and local activists, who contribute to programmes in a variety of ways; helping with recruitment, supporting fund raising, offering specialist tutoring on project work and teaching on residentials. Supporting project based programmes is labour intensive and requires a flexible mix of skills. In our experience, a typical residential school of 12/15 participants requires the involvement of a core of 4/5 tutors, if sufficient time and space is to be made available for undertaking detailed reviews of the project work on a participant by participant basis. In recent programmes past participants have also contributed to day and residential schools. Team work is essential, especially the capacity to transcend the conventional boundaries of adult education, community work and the pastoral work of the church.

Administration.

Communities in Crisis type programmes can prove complex and demanding to organise. Apart from the resource and staff implications of investing in long term development work, there is the need to establish administrative and secretarial systems to handle the organisation of day and residential schools, the maintaining of contact with tutors and participants across a range of geographic areas and the payment of back up funds to cover project expenses, child minding, travel costs etc. Relatively mundane concerns, when compared with the educational challenges of project work, but crucial in terms of the day-to-day running of programmes. For instance, a poorly organised residential can undermine confidence and morale and a failure to promptly pay expenses can financially embarrass hard pressed participants. In our experience, it is very optimistic to assume that the standard administrative systems of sponsoring bodies have either the capacity or expertise to accommodate the demands of Communities in Crisis type programmes. All too often existing structures and arrangements are geared to handling transactions with large scale organisations and prove cumbersome and rigid in dealing with the less formalised world of community groups, local activists and tutors who operate away from an

institutional base. For these reasons, the organisers of programmes must be prepared to take administration seriously and be committed to developing systems which integrate with the ethos and philosophy of the educational objectives.

Apart from maintaining contact with participants, the organisation of residential schools can present the most demanding administrative challenges to the staff of programmes. Suitable locations have to be found, transport arranged, child minding organised, special diets catered for etc. In administrative terms, residentials can be a time consuming headache and this factor, allied to the considerable cost involved, can cast doubts on the efficacy of including residentials in programmes. Cutting corners on residentials should, however, be avoided. For programmes like Communities in Crisis they provide the only opportunity to bring together participants from different areas and have proved valuable in encouraging the exchange of experiences, accelerating learning and bolstering the morale of participants. Residentials also provide hard pressed activists with a welcome break from the strains of group and family commitments. Colleges with student accommodation, like Ruskin, provide an obvious setting for holding residentials and, in addition, offer the opportunity to de-mystify fears and anxieties about attending events at educational establishments. It would, however, be misleading to imply that colleges provide the only base for the holding of residentials. Communities in Crisis has held successful residentials in such unlikely places as a Toc H centre located deep in the Oxfordshire countryside.

Winning Support and Resources.

Project based programmes can be relatively costly - in terms of participant support, staffing and day/residential schools when compared with most course based part time adult education, (eg. evening classes or WEA courses). The cost per participant has ranged from £500 for a twelve months programme without a fulltime staff person in 83/84 and £600 for a cycle of six months programmes organised between 86/88 with a staff member in post. These costs include residential/day school fees, travel and child minding expenses, a grant to cover project expenses (typing, photographs etc), and staff payments. A typical programme involving participants for a twelve month period would amount to about £800 with the variation depending upon the frequency and length of the residential schools and the staffing input. These rough figures do not reflect the true costs of programmes, as a significant element of the tutor/staff contribution is provided on a voluntary basis. As Communities in Crisis operates on a no cost to participants basis all of the necessary funding has had to be found by the organising bodies or by attracting sponsorship from other institutions or trusts. Despite being promoted by two well established and well connected organisations, Communities in

Crisis has not escaped many of the funding problems which are currently endemic in adult education. Fund raising for the first programme stretched over two years, follow up developments were delayed because of a lack of sponsorship and the scope of the current work has been severely restricted by an inability to establish a common funding base for programmes in the North West and the Swindon and Oxford areas. In our experience gaining support and resources for project based work is difficult, frustrating and subject to challenges and criticisms on several fronts. These include:

- *Project work is only appropriate for degree and post graduate students who have an academic track record. A major educational trust rejected a grant application for this reason.*

- *Project work is not clearly designed to facilitate entry into further and higher education. The Further Education Unit rejected an application for "access" funding on these grounds.*

- *Project work is not sufficiently geared to enhancing employment prospects. This was a major source of tension with the MSC funding of programmes in the North West, although the results were very positive.*

- *Because project work focuses on supporting community activists it is not capable of reaching out to the educationally disadvantaged who are isolated from local organisational networks. This question about "who benefits" was critically raised when a programme was linked to the PEP project at Ruskin College. Evaluative work in the North West and Oxford/Swindon indicates that a high percentage of the participants are educationally disadvantaged.*

Faced with these challenges the promoters of project based programmes have to be prepared to argue their corner and resist the temptation of redefining proposals, in order to conform to the requirements of potential sponsors who are interested in different educational objectives. Holding on to distinctions, especially the collectivist dimension of project work, is not easy within a context of intense competition for financial resources and a political climate which actively promotes individualism and the enterprise culture.

APPENDIX I

APPROACHES TO LEARNING: BARBARA BRYANT.

The Preparatory Education Project (PEP) was a three year action-research project, set up by Ruskin College, the WEA and the Open University, and funded by the Department of Education and Science, and the Leverhulme Trust.* PEP was designed to run a variety of "return to learn" courses and monitor and evaluate the students learning experiences. Thirteen students undertook the PEP "Communities in Crisis" unit, out of a total of 260 students who participated in all of the PEP courses. As the sample is so small the research data on the Communities in Crisis unit will have no statistical significance. However, considered in conjunction with qualitative data from students and tutors on the Communities in Crisis unit, there are certain features of this project-led course which appear to be worth highlighting.[1]

Orientation of Students.

Orientation is the collection of purposes which shapes the approach the student adopts to a specific course. Previous studies[17] have identified that adult students have slightly different orientations to study than younger students. They have a complex set of four main orientations: personal, academic, vocational and social. Personal is about developing individual interests and potential; academic is about understanding and continuing education; vocational is about the concern to improve job prospects; social is about developing social relations with others on an individual or collective basis.

The participants' orientation to the course can affect his/her approach to study and, it is possible, that different types of course may attract students with different orientations. The Communities in Crisis course recruited unqualified local activists. Did they display the same mix of orientations as unqualified "second-chance" students who were PEP's main target audience? All PEP students were asked what they hoped to get out of the course (see Appendix II for details), and Table 1 shows the number of students, expressed as a percentage of the total number of students in the group who agreed or strongly agreed with each question.

The distinguishing features of the Communities in Crisis unit was that <u>all</u> the participants defined a <u>community</u> orientation to the course, compared with less than two-thirds of PEP students

1 The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the DES, the Leverhulme Trust, or the participating organisations in PEP.

who reported that "helping their community" was one reason for doing the course. This orientation was so strong in the Communities in Crisis unit that there was even some guilt in expressing individual orientations.

Apart from their community orientation, the orientations to study of Communities in Crisis participants were similar to those of other PEP students. Academic orientations were important. Almost all the participants were doing the course because they wanted to improve their understanding of a particular subject or issue. Despite the Communities in Crisis tutors being ultra-sensitive to promoting the course as an "educational" experience, for fear of frightening off would-be participants, three-quarters of the students reported that "getting on to other courses" was one of their reasons for doing the course. As with all mature students,[18] personal orientations were very important for Communities in Crisis participants. Almost all the participants hoped for personal development but fewer joined the course for "escapist" reasons, which suggests that community involvement was a source of personal satisfaction for the participants. Like other "second-chance" students, the Communities in Crisis participants displayed the same overwhelming wish for increased confidence and two-thirds of the group had a compensatory orientation and the need to prove that they could do an educational course. Vocational orientations were slightly more prevalent with Communities in Crisis participants, three-quarters of whom wanted to become better at their job (paid or voluntary) or wanted to be able to get a job or improve their current employment position.

Communities in Crisis participants displayed similar orientations to study as other mature students: understanding, broadening and qualificatory orientations. The understanding orientation is linked with a deep approach to study, which is an effective study approach. They also displayed similar orientations to other unqualified mature students, including underconfident and compensatory orientations to study. PEP research suggests[19] that this compensatory orientation is more common in adults who did not stay on at school past the minimum leaving age, and may be linked with a surface approach to study which is an ineffective study approach.

The Personal orientation questionnaire suggests, therefore, that before starting PEP students had a mix of orientations to study which would tend to lead to both appropriate (deep) and inappropriate (surface) approaches to study. Is it possible to discover whether the Communities in Crisis educational experience contributed - positively or negatively - to the students' approach to study.

Approaches to Study.

Over recent years the Lancaster Inventory [2] has been developed to measure both the students perception of a course and his/her approach to study. It derives from the student's own perception of his/her approach to study, and the component subscales measure differences between students which have been demonstrated to have a close relationship with learning outcomes.[20] For instance, the scale "deep approach" identifies characteristics of a students' approach to learning tasks which have been found to be directly related to better learning in all subject areas, however "better" is defined. In contrast, "surface approach" is negatively associated with progress and examination results. Research indicates that an educational context which is perceived by the students as providing good teaching, low workload pressure, and freedom in learning will encourage a deep approach to learning.[21] Both the Approach to Study and Course Perceptions Questionnaires were used with all PEP students. Table 2 presents the Communities in Crisis scores for the relevant subscales.

Course Perceptions Questionnaire.

Freedom in Learning.

Communities in Crisis students scored extremely high on freedom in learning, indicating that the students perceived that they had a choice over the content and method of study and received individual encouragement. This confirms the organiser's intention that Communities in Crisis should be a student-led course. Individual students determined their own project, and jointly with other students, determined the syllabus for the group and residential experiences. All the PEP courses attempted to provide student-centred learning, either through student input into the design of the syllabus or through choices between assignments. None of the other courses, however, conferred the degree of freedom which was an integral feature of the Communities in Crisis course. It is, therefore, not surprising that freedom in learning scores were highest for this course.

Workload.

One of the concerns about a project-led course is that the student may "take on too much". In the Communities in Crisis course the student projects tended to be ambitious, involving on average the preparation of a 5,000-10,000 word report. This

2 *I am grateful to Noel Entwistle, Dai Hounsell and Paul Ramsden for permission to use their questionnaire.*

would be expected to cause workload pressure, especially for unqualified adult students. The Communities in Crisis participants, however, scored very low on workload pressure, even lower than the students on the other PEP courses. The most likely explanation of this finding is that student support was very high. Communities in Crisis was a year long course in which the students, on average, spent sixty hours in a group learning situation and thirty hours in tutorial support. The paid tutors spent considerable time with the students, particularly during the first quarter of the course, clarifying and refining the projects and planning back-up resources for the project work. "Managing the workload" was an ongoing discussion throughout the entire programme, and students working in pairs or small groups drew support from one another. The students commitment to the projects may have meant that much of the course was not regarded as "work" or, because of the importance of the project work to the individual, was not experienced as generating workload pressure. The students perception of workload pressure also appeared to be influenced by the amount of support they received from tutors.

Teaching.

Communities in Crisis participants rated their tutors highly as "good teachers", indicating that they considered the staff to be well prepared and confident teachers who helped them with study problems. This could be due to a number of factors: staff/student ratios were low (1:10) and, in addition, each student had an unpaid voluntary tutor for individual support between the day and residential schools; the paid and voluntary tutors were competent and committed to project based learning. It is also possible that, like other "return to learn" students, the participants were grateful for the opportunities provided and had no critical yardstick, derived from previous educational experience, against which to judge the ability of their tutors.

The Communities in Crisis unit was perceived by the students as providing good teaching, freedom in learning and low workloads. The way in which the educational experience was organised, therefore, should have contributed to the development of a deep approach to study from the students. We have also shown how the students started the course with a mix of an understanding orientation - lending itself towards a deep approach to study - and a compensatory orientation, which encouraged a surface approach.What was the "net" result of these conflicting influences? What approach to study did Communities in Crisis participants display?

Approach to Study Questionnaire.

All PEP students completed the questionnaire towards the end of their course, often during the residential session. Table 3

outlines the most important subscales associated with deep and surface learning and the results for PEP and Communities inCrisis students.

Communities in Crisis students scored extremely high on a deep approach to study, indicating that the students were looking for meaning in their study and were interacting actively with the subject matter of their project work and linking what they were studying with real life. This suggests that an understanding orientation, combined with a course which was organised to encourage a deep approach to learning, can succeed in its aim with unqualified local activists as students. The students also scored high on the other subscales which were linked with "better learning". They scored very high on relating ideas - showing that they were actively relating new information to previous knowledge and experience - and they also scored very high on use of evidence, which indicated that the students were examining evidence critically and using it cautiously. Intrinsic motivation - showing that students were academically motivated and interested in what they are studying for its own sake - scored slightly lower, which possibly suggests that local activists may have a less academic motivation when compared with other second chance students.

The meaning orientation - the sum of the four subscales - was extremely high for the Communities in Crisis participants, indicating that they had a very positive approach to study.

Communities in Crisis students also had a compensatory approach - associated with a surface approach to study - at the beginning of the course. The course itself should have encouraged a deep approach. What was the net result? By the end of the course Communities in Crisis students scored fairly low on a surface approach to study, ie. relying upon memorising and restricting learning to specific tasks. This suggests that the way the Communities in Crisis course was organised had mitigated against the worst effects of the compensatory orientation. It could not, however, totally remove the fear of failure - despite the absence of examinations and formal assessments. This fear was not very high, despite the compensatory orientation of the students. Extrinsic motivation - the pursuit of qualifications and career plans - was not the main motivation for learning.

Communities in Crisis students brought both helpful (understanding) and unhelpful (compensatory) orientations to their studies on the PEP unit. The organisation and ethos of the unit provided - in the eyes of the students - good teaching, limited workload pressure and a substantial amount of freedom in learning. It appeared to encourage the development of deep learning and discourage the development of surface learning. These results are encouraging. They suggest that a Communities in Crisis course can recruit unqualified local activists with a

mixture of orientations to study and provide a course which supports them in developing an approach to study which enables them to benefit from further education.

TABLE 1. STUDENT ORIENTATIONS TO STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE.

Orientation.	Communities in Crisis. N+13. %	PEP. N=260. %
Academic.		
Understanding.	92	85
Qualificatory.	77	76
Personal.		
Broadening.	92	92
Underconfident.	100	85
Compensatory.	69	69
Escapist.	23	39
Vocational.		
Work.	77	63
Employment.	70	53
Social.		
Individual.	85	78
Collective.	100	60

TABLE 2. COURSE PERCEPTIONS QUESTIONNAIRE.

Subscale Range.	Communities in Crisis. N=13.	PEP N=260
Good Teaching (0-20).	17.4	17.8
Freedom in Learning (0-20).	18.5	16.4
Workload (0-20).	4.5	5.3

TABLE 3. APPROACH TO STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE.

Subscale Range.	*Communities in Crisis. N=13.*	*PEP. N=260*
Deep Approach (0-16).	*13.8*	*13.1*
Relating Ideas (0-16).	*12.8*	*12.0*
Use of Evidence (0-16).	*12.8*	*10.9*
Intrinsic Motivation (0-16).	*11.6*	*12.1*
Meaning Orientation (0-64).	*51.0*	*48.1*
Surface Approach (0-24).	*13.5*	*12.5*
Syllabus Bound (0-12).	*5.7*	*6.7*
Fear of Failure (0-12).	*6.9*	*6.2*
Extrinsic Motivation (0-16).	*4.8*	*4.4*
Reproducing Orientation (0-64).	*30.9*	*29.8*

APPENDIX II

STUDENT ORIENTATIONS TO STUDY.

What I want to gain from this course: (For each question, please tick the answer which comes closest to what you feel).

By doing this course:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree or Don't know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I want to increase my self-confidence.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
I want to be able to do my work (paid or voluntary) better.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
I want to be able to get a job (better job).	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
I want to prove that I can do an education course.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
I hope to find something else in my life - something that will help me develop.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
I want to be able to get onto other educational/training courses.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
I want to understand this area of study/this project better.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
I want to meet other people.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
I want to be able to help my community better.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
I want to escape for a while from a situation at work or at home which does not satisfy me.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

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Manchester Business School

Manchester M15 6PB

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